



CHARLES LAMB

After the portrait by Henry Meyer

THE
LAST ESSAYS
OF ELIA

BY
CHARLES LAMB

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY
AUGUSTINE BIRRELL

THE GRESHAM PUBLISHING COMPANY
34 SOUTHAMPTON STREET STRAND LONDON

INTRODUCTION

made, we know, in 1823. It did not reach a real second edition until 1835, after Lamb's death.

O miseræ hominum mentes! O pectora cæca!

Where are the realms of Taste? Mr. E. V. Lucas observes shrewdly, as is his wont, "possibly the book was too dear—it was published at nine shillings and sixpence". Commercially speaking, this was too high a price. But it was an age of high prices. Lamb more than once feelingly complains of the monstrous sums demanded for the poetry of his friends Wordsworth and Southey. Twelve shillings for *Vaudracour and Julia*! Nine and sixpence was undoubtedly a good deal to pay across the counter for a new book of Essays. The first edition of Bacon's Essays was sold in February, 1597, for twenty-pence, but a good deal must be allowed for the difference in the value of money. Booksellers at all times have been strangely timid in this matter of pricing their wares, and indeed how was a bookseller to know what a treasure he had in either Bacon or Lamb?

Ten years later, viz. in 1833, Lamb, despite the cold reception of *Elia*, made, with his friend Moxon as his publisher, his second collection, the *Last Essays of Elia* (price 'nine shillings), which were doomed to meet the same chilly

INTRODUCTION

fate. They had no sale, and when Lamb died on the 27th of December, 1834, he had no reason to suppose that his *Elia*, both first and last, were destined to join "that class of perpetually self-reproductive volumes, Great Nature's Stereotypes" to which he had referred in "Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading". This class is necessarily a small one. To gain admission to it is correspondingly difficult. How it is done no one can precisely say, but *Elia* is there and can never be dislodged.

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL.

	Page
Preface by a Friend of the Late Elia	ix
Blakesmoor in H—shire	1
Poor Relations	9
Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading	19
Stage Illusion	31
To the Shade of Elliston	37
Ellistoniana	41
The Old Margate Hoy	49
The Convalescent	61
Sanity of True Genius	69
Captain Jackson	75
The Superannuated Man	83
The Genteel Style in Writing	95
Barbara S——	103
The Tombs in the Abbey	111
Amicus Redivivus	115
Some Sonnets of Sir Philip Sydney	123
Newspapers Thirty-five Years Ago	135
Barrenness of the Imaginative Faculty in the Productions of Modern Art	147
The Wedding	165

CONTENTS

	Page
Rejoicings upon the New Year's Coming	
of Age - - - - - -	175
Old China - - - - -	183
The Child Angel; A Dream - -	193
Confessions of a Drunkard - -	199
Popular Fallacies :	
That a Bully is always a Coward - -	213
That Ill-gotten Gain never Prospers -	214
That a Man must not Laugh at his own Jest -	215
That such a one shows his breeding.—That it is easy to perceive he is no gentleman -	216
That the Poor copy the Vices of the Rich -	217
That Enough is as good as a Feast -	219
Of two Disputants, the Warmest is generally in the Wrong - - - -	220
That Verbal Allusions are not Wit, because they will not bear a Translation -	221
That the Worst Puns are the Best -	222
That Handsome is that Handsome does -	226
That we must not look a Gift Horse in the Mouth - - - - -	229
That Home is Home though it is never so homely - - - - -	232
That you must love me and love my dog -	239
That we should rise with the Lark -	244
That we should lie down with the Lamb -	247
That a Sulky Temper is a Misfortune -	250
Notes by the Author - - -	255
NOTES - - - - -	259

Preface

By a Friend of the Late Elia

This poor gentleman, who for some months past had been in a declining way, hath at length paid his final tribute to nature.

To say truth, it is time he were gone. The humour of the thing, if there ever was much in it, was pretty well exhausted; and a two years' and a half existence has been a tolerable duration for a phantom.

I am now at liberty to confess that much which I have heard objected to my late friend's writings was well founded. Crude they are, I grant you—a sort of unlicked, incondite things—villainously pranked in an affected array of antique modes and phrases. They had not been *his*, if they had been other than such; and better it is, that a writer should be natural in a self-pleasing quaintness, than to affect a naturalness (so called) that should be strange to him. Egotistical they have been pronounced by some who did not know, that what he tells us, as of

PREFACE

thinkers; while the other faction set him down for a hypocrite, or persuaded themselves that he belied his sentiments. Few understood him; and I am not certain that at all times he quite understood himself. He too much affected that dangerous figure—irony. He sowed doubtful speeches, and reaped plain, unequivocal hatred. He would interrupt the gravest discussion with some light jest; and yet, perhaps, not quite irrelevant in ears that could understand it. Your long and much talkers hated him. The informal habit of his mind, joined to an inveterate impediment of speech, forbade him to be an orator; and he seemed determined that no one else should play that part when he was present. He was *petit* and ordinary in his person and appearance. I have seen him sometimes in what is called good company, but where he has been a stranger, sit silent, and be suspected for an odd fellow; till some unlucky occasion provoking it, he would stutter out some senseless pun (not altogether senseless, perhaps, if rightly taken), which has stamped his character for the evening. It was hit or miss with him; but nine times out of ten, he contrived by this device to send away a whole company his enemies. His conceptions rose kindlier than his utterance, and his happiest *impromptus* had the appearance of effort. He

PREFACE

has been accused of trying to be witty, when in truth he was but struggling to give his poor thoughts articulation. He chose his companions for some individuality of character which they manifested. Hence, not many persons of science, and few professed *litterati*, were of his councils. They were, for the most part, persons of an uncertain fortune; and, as to such people commonly nothing is more obnoxious than a gentleman of settled (though moderate) income, he passed with most of them for a great miser. To my knowledge this was a mistake. His *intimados*, to confess a truth, were in the world's eye a ragged regiment. He found them floating on the surface of society; and the colour, or something else, in the weed pleased him. The burrs stuck to him—but they were good and loving burrs for all that. He never greatly cared for the society of what are called good people. If any of these were scandalized (and offences were sure to arise), he could not help it. When he has been remonstrated with for not making more concessions to the feelings of good people, he would retort by asking, what one point did these good people ever concede to him? He was temperate in his meals and diversions, but always kept a little on this side of abstemiousness. Only in the use of the Indian weed he might be thought a little

PREFACE

excessive. He took it, he would say, as a solvent of speech. Marry—as the friendly vapour ascended, how his prattle would curl up sometimes with it! the ligaments which tongue-tied him were loosened, and the stammerer proceeded a statish!

I do not know whether I ought to bemoan or rejoice that my old friend is departed. His jests were beginning to grow obsolete, and his stories to be found out. He felt the approaches of age; and while he pretended to cling to life, you saw how slender were the ties left to bind him. Discoursing with him latterly on this subject, he expressed himself with a pettishness which I thought unworthy of him. In our walks about his suburban retreat (as he called it) at Shacklewell, some children belonging to a school of industry had met us, and bowed and curtseyed, as he thought, in an especial manner to *him*. “They take me for a visiting governor”, he muttered earnestly. He had a horror, which he carried to a foible, of looking like anything important and parochial. He thought that he approached nearer to that stamp daily. He had a general aversion from being treated like a grave or respectable character, and kept a wary eye upon the advances of age that should so entitle him. He herded always, while it was possible, with people younger than himself.

PREFACE

He did not conform to the march of time, but was dragged along in the procession. His manners lagged behind his years. He was too much of the boy-man. The *toga virilis* never sate gracefully on his shoulders. The impressions of infancy had burnt into him, and he resented the impertinence of manhood. These were weaknesses; but such as they were, they are a key to explicate some of his writings.

Blakesmoor in H—shire

I do not know a pleasure more affecting than to range at will over the deserted apartments of some fine old family mansion. The traces of extinct grandeur admit of a better passion than envy: and contemplations on the great and good, whom we fancy in succession to have been its inhabitants, weave for us illusions incompatible with the bustle of modern occupancy, and vanities of foolish present aristocracy. The same difference of feeling, I think, attends us between entering an empty and a crowded church. In the latter it is chance but some present human frailty—an act of inattention on the part of some of the auditory—or a trait of affectation, or worse, vain-glory, on that of the preacher—puts us by our best thoughts, disharmonizing the place and the occasion. But wouldst thou know the beauty of holiness?—go alone on some week-day, borrowing the keys of good Master Sexton, traverse the cool aisles of some country church: think of the piety that has kneeled there—the congregations, old and young, that have found consolation there—the meek pastor—the docile parishioner. With no disturbing emotions, no cross conflicting comparisons, drink in the

BLAKESMOOR IN H—SHIRE

tranquillity of the place, till thou thyself become as fixed and motionless as the marble effigies that kneel and weep around thee.

Journeying northward lately, I could not resist going some few miles out of my road to look upon the remains of an old great house with which I had been impressed in this way in infancy. I was apprised that the owner of it had lately pulled it down; still I had a vague notion that it could not all have perished,—that so much solidity with magnificence could not have been crushed all at once into the mere dust and rubbish which I found it.

The work of ruin had proceeded with a swift hand indeed, and the demolition of a few weeks had reduced it to—an antiquity.

I was astonished at the indistinction of everything. Where had stood the great gates? What bounded the court-yard? Whereabout did the out-houses commence? A few bricks only lay as representatives of that which was so stately and so spacious.

Death does not shrink up his human victim at this rate. The burnt ashes of a man weigh more in their proportion.

Had I seen these brick-and-mortar knaves at their process of destruction, at the plucking of every panel I should have felt the varlets at my heart. I should have cried out to them to spare a plank at least out of the cheerful store-room in whose hot window-seat I used to sit and read Cowley, with the grass-plot before, and the hum and flappings of that one solitary wasp that ever haunted it about me—it is in mine

BLAKESMOOR IN H—SHIRE

cars now, as oft as summer returns ; or a panel of the yellow-room.

Why, every plank and panel of that house for me had magic in it. The tapestried bedrooms—tapestry so much better than painting—not adorning merely, but peopling the wainscots—at which childhood ever and anon would steal a look, shifting its coverlid (replaced as quickly) to exercise its tender courage in a momentary eye-encounter with those stern bright visages, staring reciprocally—all Ovid on the walls, in colours vividder than his descriptions. Actæon in mid sprout, with the unappeasable prudery of Diana ; and the still more provoking and almost culinary coolness of Dan Phœbus, eel-fashion, deliberately divesting of Marsyas.

Then, that haunted room—in which old Mrs. Battle died—whereinto I have crept, but always in the daytime, with a passion of fear ; and a sneaking curiosity, terror-tainted, to hold communication with the past.—*How shall they build it up again ?*

It was an old deserted place, yet not so long deserted but that traces of the splendour of past inmates were everywhere apparent. Its furniture was still standing—even to the tarnished gilt leather battledores and crumbling feathers of shuttlecocks in the nursery, which told that children had once played there. But I was a lonely child, and had the range at will of every apartment, knew every nook and corner, wondered and worshipped everywhere.

The solitude of childhood is not so much

BLAKESMOOR IN H—SHIRE

the mother of thought as it is the feeder of love, and silence, and admiration. So strange a passion for the place possessed me in those years, that though there lay—I shame to say how few roods distant from the mansion—half hid by trees, what I judged some romantic lake, such was the spell which bound me to the house, and such my carefulness not to pass its strict and proper precincts; that the idle waters lay unexplored for me; and not till late in life, curiosity prevailing over elder devotion, I found, to my astonishment, a pretty brawling brook had been the *Lacus Incognitus* of my infancy. Variegated views, extensive prospects—and those at no great distance from the house—I was told of such—what were they to me, being out of the boundaries of my Eden?—So far from a wish to roam, I would have drawn, methought, still closer the fences of my chosen prison, and have been hemmed in by a yet securer cincture of those excluding garden walls. I could have exclaimed with that garden-loving poet—

Bind me, ye woodbines, in your twines;
Curl me about, ye gadding vines;
And oh so close your circles lace,
That I may never leave this place;
But, lest your fetters prove too weak,
Ere I your silken bondage break,
Do you, O brambles, chain me too,
And, courteous briars, nail me through.

I was here as in a lonely temple. Snug firesides—the low-built roof—parlours ten feet

BLAKESMOOR IN H—SHIRE

by ten—frugal boards, and all the homeliness of home—these were the condition of my birth—the wholesome soil which I was planted in. Yet, without impeachment to their tenderest lessons, I am not sorry to have had glances of something beyond, and to have taken, if but a peep, in childhood, at the contrasting accidents of a great fortune.

To have the feeling of gentility it is not necessary to have been born gentle. The pride of ancestry may be had on cheaper terms than to be obliged to an importunate race of ancestors; and the coatless antiquary in his unemblazoned cell, revolving the long line of a Mowbray's or De Clifford's pedigree, at those sounding names may warm himself into as gay a vanity as those who do inherit them. The claims of birth are ideal merely, and what herald shall go about to strip me of an idea? Is it trenchant to their swords? can it be hacked off as a spur can? or torn away like a tarnished garter?

What, else, were the families of the great to us? what pleasure should we take in their tedious genealogies, or their capitulatory brass monuments? What to us the uninterrupted current of their bloods, if our own did not answer within us to a cognate and correspondent elevation?

O wherefore else, O tattered and diminished 'Scutcheon that hung upon the time-worn walls of thy princely stairs, BLAKESMOOR! have I in childhood so oft stood poring upon thy mystic characters—thy emblematic sup-

porters, with their prophetic “Resurgam”—till, every dreg of peasantry purging off, I received into myself Very Gentility? Thou wert first in my morning eyes; and of nights hast detained my steps from bedward, till it was but a step from gazing at thee to dreaming on thee.

This is the only true gentry by adoption; the veritable change of blood, and not, as empirics have fabled, by transfusion.

Who it was by dying that had earned the splendid trophy, I know not, I enquired not; but its fading rags, and colours cobweb-stained, told that its subject was of two centuries back.

And what if my ancestor at that date was some Damœtas,—feeding flocks, not his own, upon the hills of Lincoln—did I in less earnest vindicate to myself the family trappings of this once proud Ægon?—repaying by a backward triumph the insults he might possibly have heaped in his lifetime upon my poor pastoral progenitor.

If it were presumption so to speculate, the present owners of the mansion had least reason to complain. They had long forsaken the old house of their fathers for a newer trifle; and I was left to appropriate to myself what images I could pick up, to raise my fancy, or to soothe my vanity.

I was the true descendant of those old W——s, and not the present family of that name, who had fled the old waste places.

Mine was that gallery of good old family portraits, which as I have gone over, giving

BLAKESMOOR IN H—SHIRE

them in fancy my own family name, one—and then another—would seem to smile, reaching forward from the canvas, to recognize the new relationship; while the rest looked grave, as it seemed, at the vacancy in their dwelling, and thoughts of fled posterity.

That Beauty with the cool blue pastoral drapery, and a lamb—that hung next the great bay window—with the bright yellow H—shire hair, and eye of watchet hue—so like my Alice!—I am persuaded she was a true Elia—Mildred Elia, I take it.

[From her, and from my passion for her—for I first learned love from a picture—Bridget took the hint of those pretty whimsical lines, which thou mayst see, if haply thou hast never seen them, Reader, in the margin. But my Mildred grew not old, like the imaginary Helen.]

Mine, too, BLAKESMOOR, was thy noble Marble Hall, with its mosaic pavements, and its Twelve Cæsars—stately busts in marble—ranged round: of whose countenances, young reader of faces as I was, the frowning beauty of Nero, I remember, had most of my wonder; but the mild Galba had my love. There they stood in the coldness of death, yet freshness of immortality.

Mine, too, thy lofty Justice Hall, with its one chair of authority, high-backed and wickered, once the terror of luckless poacher, or self-forgetful maiden—so common since, that bats have roosted in it.

Mine, too,—whose else?—thy costly fruit-

BLAKESMOOR IN H—SHIRE

garden, with its sun-baked southern wall; the ampler pleasure-garden, rising backwards from the house in triple terraces, with flower-pots now of palest lead, save that a speck here and there, saved from the elements, bespake their pristine state to have been gilt and glittering; the verdant quarters backwarder still; and, stretching still beyond, in old formality, thy firry wilderness, the haunt of the squirrel, and the day-long murmuring wood-pigeon, with that antique image in the centre, God or Goddess I wist not; but child of Athens or old Rome paid never a sincerer worship to Pan or to Sylvanus in their native groves than I to that fragmental mystery.

Was it for this that I kissed my childish hands too fervently in your idol-worship, walks and windings of BLAKESMOOR! for this, or what sin of mine, has the plough passed over your pleasant places? I sometimes think that as men, when they die, do not die all, so of their extinguished habitations there may be a hope—a germ to be revived.

Poor Relations

A poor relation—is the most irrelevant thing in nature,—a piece of impertinent correspondence,—an odious approximation,—a haunting conscience,—a preposterous shadow, lengthening in the noontide of our prosperity,—an unwelcome remembrancer,—a perpetually recurring mortification,—a drain on your purse,—a more intolerable dun upon your pride,—a drawback upon success,—a rebuke to your rising,—a stain in your blood,—a blot on your 'scutcheon,—a rent in your garment,—a death's head at your banquet,—Agathocles' pot,—a Mordecai in your gate,—a Lazarus at your door,—a lion in your path,—a frog in your chamber,—a fly in your ointment,—a mote in your eye,—a triumph to your enemy,—an apology to your friends,—the one thing not needful,—the hail in harvest,—the ounce of sour in a pound of sweet.

He is known by his knock. Your heart telleth you "That is Mr. ———". A rap, between familiarity and respect; that demands, and at the same time seems to despair of, entertainment. He entereth smiling and—embarrassed. He holdeth out his hand to you to shake, and—draweth it back again. He

POOR RELATIONS

casually looketh in about dinner-time—when the table is full. He offereth to go away, seeing you have company—but is induced to stay. He filleth a chair, and your visitor's two children are accommodated at a side-table. He never cometh upon open days, when your wife says, with some complacency, "My dear, perhaps Mr. —— will drop in to-day". He remembereth birthdays—and professeth he is fortunate to have stumbled upon one. He declareth against fish, the turbot being small—yet suffereth himself to be importuned into a slice against his first resolution. He sticketh by the port—yet will be prevailed upon to empty the remainder glass of claret, if a stranger press it upon him. He is a puzzle to the servants, who are fearful of being too obsequious, or not civil enough, to him. The guests think "they have seen him before". Everyone speculateth upon his condition; and the most part take him to be—a tide-waiter. He calleth you by your Christian name to imply that his other is the same with your own. He is too familiar by half, yet you wish he had less diffidence. With half the familiarity he might pass for a casual dependant; with more boldness he would be in no danger of being taken for what he is. He is too humble for a friend, yet taketh on him more state than befits a client. He is a worse guest than a country tenant, inasmuch as he bringeth up no rent—yet 'tis odds, from his garb and demeanour, that your guests take him for one. He is asked to make one at the whist table; refuseth on the score

POOR RELATIONS

of poverty, and—resents being left out. When the company break up, he proffereth to go for a coach—and lets the servant go. He recollects your grandfather; and will thrust in some mean and quite unimportant anecdote of—the family. He knew it when it was not quite so flourishing as “he is blest in seeing it now”. He reviveth past situations to institute what he calleth—favourable comparisons. With a reflecting sort of congratulation, he will enquire the price of your furniture; and insults you with a special commendation of your window-curtains. He is of opinion that the urn is the more elegant shape; but, after all, there was something more comfortable about the old tea-kettle—which you must remember. He dare say you must find a great convenience in having a carriage of your own, and appealeth to your lady if it is not so. Enquireth if you have had your arms done on vellum yet; and did not know, till lately, that such-and-such had been the crest of the family. His memory is unseasonable; his compliments perverse; his talk a trouble; his stay pertinacious; and when he goeth away, you dismiss his chair into a corner as precipitately as possible, and feel fairly rid of two nuisances.

There is a worse evil under the sun, and that is—a female Poor Relation. You may do something with the other; you may pass him off tolerably well; but your indigent she-relative is hopeless. “He is an old humorist,” you may say, “and affects to go threadbare. His circumstances are better than folks would

POOR RELATIONS

Take them to be. You are fond of having a
 hat Character at your table, and truly he is one.”
 young in the indications of female poverty there
 discombe no disguise. No woman dresses below
 college self from caprice. The truth must out
 poor stud out shuffling. “She is plainly related to
 found shelf—s; or what does she at their house?”
 and studied, in all probability, your wife’s cousin.
 No times out of ten at least this is the case.

Her garb is something between a gentle-
 woman and a beggar, yet the former evidently
 predominates. She is most provokingly humble,
 and ostentatiously sensible to her inferiority.
 He may require to be repressed sometimes—
aliquando sufflaminandus erat—but there is no
 raising her. You send her soup at dinner,
 and she begs to be helped—after the gentle-
 men. Mr. — requests the honour of taking
 wine with her; she hesitates between Port and
 Madeira, and chooses the former—because he
 does. She calls the servant *Sir*, and insists on
 not troubling him to hold her plate. The
 housekeeper patronizes her. The children’s
 governess takes upon her to correct her, when
 she has mistaken the piano for a harpsichord. *

Richard Amlet, Esq., in the play, is a notable
 instance of the disadvantages to which this chi-
 merical notion of *affinity constituting a claim to*
acquaintance may subject the spirit of a gentle-
 man. A little foolish blood is all that is betwixt
 him and a lady with a great estate. His stars
 are perpetually crossed by the malignant mater-
 nity of an old woman, who persists in calling
 him “her son Dick”. But she has where-

POOR RELATIONS

withal in the end to recompense his indignities and float him again upon the brilliant surface under which it had been her seeming buoyancy, and pleasure all along to sink him. Autuitously besides, are not of Dick's temper could not know an Amlet in real life, who, wanting of Oxford buoyancy, sank indeed. Poor W——rmer; and my own standing at Christ's, a fine case the point a youth of promise. If he had a heart can bear, was too much pride; but its quality estimate the offensive; it was not of that sort which last after the heart, and serves to keep inferiors of his distance; it only sought to ward off derogation from itself. It was the principle of self-respect, carried as far as it could go, without infringing upon that respect which he would have everyone else equally maintain for himself. He would have you to think alike with him on this topic. Many a quarrel have I had with him, when we were rather older boys, and our tallness made us more obnoxious to observation in the blue clothes, because I would not thread the alleys and blind ways of the town with him to elude notice, when we have been out together on a holiday in the streets of this sneering and prying metropolis. W—— went, sore with these notions, to Oxford, where the dignity and sweetness of a scholar's life, meeting with the alloy of a humble introduction, wrought in him a passionate devotion to the place, with a profound aversion from the society. The servitor's gown (worse than his school array) clung to him with Nessian venom. He thought himself ridiculous in a garb, under which Latimer must

POOR RELATIONS

are walked erect, and in which Hooker, in his
 hat ~~Char~~ days, possibly flaunted in a vein of no
 young in-mendable vanity. In the depth of
 discombe shades, or in his lonely chamber, the
 college self shrank from observation. He
 poor student among books, which insult not;
 found shelter, that ask no questions of a youth's
 and studies, in He was lord of his library, and
 N—-—-timored for looking out beyond his
 Her garb The healing influence of studious
 woman was upon him, to soothe and to
 predict. He was almost a healthy man, when
 an waywardness of his fate broke out against
 him with a second and worse malignity. The
 father of W—-— had hitherto exercised the
 humble profession of house-painter at N—-—,
 near Oxford. A supposed interest with some
 of the heads of colleges had now induced him to
 take up his abode in that city, with the hope
 of being employed upon some public works
 which were talked of. From that moment I
 read in the countenance of the young man the
 determination which at length tore him from
 academical pursuits for ever. To a person un-
 acquainted with our universities, the distance
 between the gownsmen and the townsmen, as
 they are called—the trading part of the latter
 especially—is carried to an excess that would
 appear harsh and incredible. The temperament
 of W—-—'s father was diametrically the reverse
 of his own. Old W—-— was a little, busy,
 cringing tradesman, who, with his son upon his
 arm, would stand bowing and scraping, cap in
 hand, to anything that wore the semblance of

POOR RELATIONS

a gown—insensible to the winks and opener remonstrances of the young man, to whose chamber-fellow, or equal in standing, perhaps, he was thus obsequiously and gratuitously ducking. Such a state of things could not last. W—— must change the air of Oxford or be suffocated. He chose the former; and let the sturdy moralist, who strains the point of the filial duties as high as they can bear, censure the dereliction; he cannot estimate the struggle. I stood with W——, the last afternoon I ever saw him, under the eaves of his paternal dwelling. It was in the fine lane leading from the High-street to the back of * * * * college, where W—— kept his rooms. He seemed thoughtful, and more reconciled. I ventured to rally him—finding him in a better mood—upon a representation of the Artist Evangelist, which the old man, whose affairs were beginning to flourish, had caused to be set up in a splendid sort of frame over his really handsome shop, either as a token of prosperity or badge of gratitude to his saint. W—— looked up at the Luke, and, like Satan, “knew his mounted sign—and fled”. A letter on his father’s table the next morning announced that he had accepted a commission in a regiment about to embark for Portugal. He was among the first who perished before the walls of St. Sebastian.

I do not know how, upon a subject which I began with treating half seriously, I should have fallen upon a recital so eminently painful; but this heme of poor relationship is replete

POOR RELATIONS

with so much matter for tragic as well as comic associations, that it is difficult to keep the account distinct without blending. The earliest impressions which I received on this matter are certainly not attended with anything painful, or very humiliating, in the recalling. At my father's table (no very splendid one) was to be found, every Saturday, the mysterious figure of an aged gentleman, clothed in neat black, of a sad yet comely appearance. His deportment was of the essence of gravity; his words few or none; and I was not to make a noise in his presence. I had little inclination to have done so—for my cue was to admire in silence. A particular elbow-chair was appropriated to him, which was in no case to be violated. A peculiar sort of sweet pudding, which appeared on no other occasion, distinguished the days of his coming. I used to think him a prodigiously rich man. All I could make out of him was, that he and my father had been schoolfellows, a world ago, at Lincoln, and that he came from the Mint. The Mint I knew to be a place where all the money was coined—and I thought he was the owner of all that money. Awful ideas of the Tower twined themselves about his presence. He seemed above human infirmities and passions. A sort of melancholy grandeur invested him. From some inexplicable doom I fancied him obliged to go about in an eternal suit of mourning; a captive—a stately being let out of the Tower on Saturdays. Often have I wondered at the temerity of my father, who, in spite of an habitual

POOR RELATIONS

general respect which we all in common manifested towards him, would venture now and then to stand up against him in some argument, touching their youthful days. The houses of the ancient city of Lincoln are divided (as most of my readers know) between the dwellers on the hill and in the valley. This marked distinction formed an obvious division between the boys who lived above (however brought together in a common school) and the boys whose paternal residence was on the plain; a sufficient cause of hostility in the code of these young Grotiuses. My father had been a leading Mountaineer; and would still maintain the general superiority in skill and hardihood of the *Above Boys* (his own faction) over the *Below Boys* (so were they called), of which party his contemporary had been a chieftain. Many and hot were the skirmishes on this topic—the only one upon which the old gentleman was ever brought out—and bad blood bred; even sometimes almost to the recommencement (so I expected) of actual hostilities. But my father, who scorned to insist upon advantages, generally contrived to turn the conversation upon some adroit by-commendation of the old Minster; in the general preference of which, before all other cathedrals in the island, the dweller on the hill and the plain-born could meet on a conciliating level, and lay down their less important differences. Once only I saw the old gentleman really ruffled, and I remember with anguish the thought that came over me: “Perhaps he will never come here again”.

POOR RELATIONS

He had been pressed to take another plate of the viand, which I have already mentioned as the indispensable concomitant of his visits. He had refused with a resistance amounting to rigour, when my aunt, an old Lincolnian, but who had something of this, in common with my cousin Bridget, that she would sometimes press civility out of season—uttered the following memorable application:—"Do take another slice, Mr. Billet, for you do not get pudding every day". The old gentleman said nothing at the time—but he took occasion in the course of the evening, when some argument had intervened between them, to utter with an emphasis which chilled the company, and which chills me now as I write it:—"Woman, you are superannuated!" John Billet did not survive long after the digesting of this affront; but he survived long enough to assure me that peace was actually restored! and, if I remember aright, another pudding was discreetly substituted in the place of that which had occasioned the offence. He died at the Mint (anno 1781) where he had long held, what he accounted, a comfortable independence; and with five pounds, fourteen shillings, and a penny, which were found in his escritoir after his decease, left the world, blessing God that he had enough to bury him, and that he had never been obliged to any man for a sixpence. This was—a Poor Relation.

Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading

To mind the inside of a book is to entertain one's self with the forced product of another man's brain. Now I think a man of quality and breeding may be much amused with the natural sprouts of his own.—*Lord Foppington, in "The Relapse"*.

An ingenious acquaintance of my own was so much struck with this bright sally of his lordship, that he has left off reading altogether, to the great improvement of his originality. At the hazard of losing some credit on this head, I must confess that I dedicate no inconsiderable portion of my time to other people's thoughts. I dream away my life in others' speculations. I love to lose myself in other men's minds. When I am not walking, I am reading; I cannot sit and think. Books think for me.

I have no repugnances. Shaftesbury is not too genteel for me, nor Jonathan Wild too low. I can read anything which I call *a book*. There are things in that shape which I cannot allow for such.

In this catalogue of *books which are no books*—*biblia a-biblia*—I reckon Court Calendars, Directories, Pocket Books [the Literary ex-

DETACHED THOUGHTS ON

cepted], Draught Boards, bound and lettered on the back, Scientific Treatises, Almanacs, Statutes at Large: the works of Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Beattie, Soame Jenyns, and, generally, all those volumes which "no gentleman's library should be without": the Histories of Flavius Josephus (that learned Jew), and Paley's *Moral Philosophy*. With these exceptions, I can read almost anything. I bless my stars for a taste so catholic, so unexcluding.

I confess that it moves my spleen to see these *things in books' clothing* perched upon shelves, like false saints, usurpers of true shrines, intruders into the sanctuary, thrusting out the legitimate occupants. To reach down a well-bound semblance of a volume, and hope it some kind-hearted play-book, then, opening what "seem its leaves", to come bolt upon a withering Population Essay. To expect a Steele or a Farquhar, and find—Adam Smith. To view a well-arranged assortment of blockheaded Encyclopædias (Anglicanas or Metropolitanas) set out in an array of Russia, or Morocco, when a tithe of that good leather would comfortably reclothe ~~my~~ shivering folios, would renovate Paracelsus himself, and enable old Raymund Lully to look like himself again in the world. I never see these impostors but I long to strip them, to warm my ragged veterans in their spoils.

To be strong-backed and neat-bound is the desideratum of a volume. Magnificence comes after. This, when it can be afforded, is not to be lavished upon all kinds of books indiscrimi-

BOOKS AND READING

nately. I would not dress a set of Magazines, for instance, in full suit. The dishabille, or half-binding (with Russia backs ever) is *our* costume. A Shakspeare or a Milton (unless the first editions), it were mere foppery to trick out in gay apparel. The possession of them confers no distinction. The exterior of them (the things themselves being so common), strange to say, raises no sweet emotions, no tickling sense of property in the owner. Thomson's *Seasons*, again, looks best (I maintain it) a little torn and dog's-eared. How beautiful to a genuine lover of reading are the sullied leaves and worn-out appearance, nay, the very odour (beyond Russia) if we would not forget kind feelings in fastidiousness, of an old "Circulating Library" *Tom Jones* or *Vicar of Wakefield*! How they speak of the thousand thumbs that have turned over their pages with delight!—of the lone sempstress whom they may have cheered (milliner, or harder-working mantua-maker) after her long day's needle-toil, running far into midnight, when she has snatched an hour, ill spared from sleep, to steep her cares, as in some Lethean cup, in spelling out their enchanting contents! Who would have them a whit less soiled? What better condition could we desire to see them in?

In some respects the better a book is, the less it demands from binding. Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, and all that class of perpetually self-reproductive volumes—Great Nature's Stereotypes—we see them individually perish with less regret, because we know the copies of

DETACHED THOUGHTS ON

them to be “*eterne*”. But where a book is at once both good and rare—where the individual is almost the species, and when *that* perishes,

We know not where is that Promethean torch
That can its light relumine,—

such a book, for instance, as the *Life of the Duke of Newcastle*, by his Duchess—no casket is rich enough, no casing sufficiently durable, to honour and keep safe such a jewel.

Not only rare volumes of this description, which seem hopeless ever to be reprinted, but old editions of writers, such as Sir Philip Sydney, Bishop Taylor, Milton in his prose works, Fuller—of whom we *have* reprints, yet the books themselves, though they go about, and are talked of here and there, we know have not endenized themselves (nor possibly ever will) in the national heart, so as to become stock books—it is good to possess these in durable and costly covers. I do not care for a First Folio of Shakspeare. [You cannot make a *pet* book of an author whom everybody reads.] I rather prefer the common editions of Rowe and Tonson, without notes, and with *plates*, which, being so execrably bad, serve as maps, or modest remembrancers, to the text; and, without pretending to any supposable emulation with it, are so much^d better than the Shakspeare gallery *engravings*, which *did*. I have a community of feeling with my countrymen about his Plays, and I like those editions of him best which have been oftenest tumbled about and handled.—On the contrary, I can-

not read Beaumont and Fletcher but in Folio. The Octavo editions are painful to look at. I have no sympathy with them. If they were as much read as the current editions of the other poet, I should prefer them in that shape to the older one. I do not know a more heartless sight than the reprint of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*. What need was there of unearthing the bones of that fantastic old great man, to expose them in a winding-sheet of the newest fashion to modern censure? What hapless stationer could dream of Burton ever becoming popular? —The wretched Malone could not do worse, when he bribed the sexton of Stratford church to let him whitewash the painted effigy of old Shakespeare, which stood there, in rude but lively fashion depicted, to the very colour of the cheek, the eye, the eyebrow, hair, the very dress he used to wear—the only authentic testimony we had, however imperfect, of these curious parts and parcels of him. They covered him over with a coat of white paint. By —, if I had been a justice of peace for Warwickshire, I would have clapt both commentator and sexton fast in the stocks, for a pair of meddling, sacrilegious varlets.

I think I see them at their work—these sapient trouble-tombs.

Shall I be thought fantastical if I confess that the names of some of our poets sound sweeter, and have a finer relish to the ear—to mine, at least—than that of Milton or of Shakspeare? It may be that the latter are more staled and rung upon in common discourse. The sweetest

DETACHED THOUGHTS ON

names, and which carry a perfume in the mention, are Kit Marlowe, Drayton, Drummond of Hawthornden, and Cowley.

Much depends upon *when* and *where* you read a book. In the five or six impatient minutes, before the dinner is quite ready, who would think of taking up the *Faerie Queene* for a stop-gap, or a volume of Bishop Andrewes' sermons?

Milton almost requires a solemn service of music to be played before you enter upon him. But he brings his music, to which, who listens, had need bring docile thoughts, and purged ears.

Winter evenings—the world shut out—with less of ceremony the gentle Shakspeare enters. At such a season the *Tempest*, or his own *Winter's Tale*—

These two poets you cannot avoid reading aloud—to yourself or (as it chances) to some single person listening. More than one—and it degenerates into an audience.

Books of quick interest, that hurry on for incidents, are for the eye to glide over only. It will not do to read them out. I could never listen to even the better kind of modern novels without extreme irksomeness.

A newspaper, read out, is intolerable. In some of the bank offices it is the custom (to save so much individual time) for one of the clerks—who is the best scholar—to commence upon the *Times* or the *Chronicle*, and recite its entire contents aloud, *pro bono publico*. With every advantage of lungs and elocution, the

BOOKS AND READING

effect is singularly vapid. In barbers' shops and public-houses a fellow will get up and spell out a paragraph, which he communicates as some discovery. Another follows with *his* selection. So the entire journal transpires at length by piecemeal. Seldom-readers are slow readers, and, without this expedient, no one in the company would probably ever travel through the contents of a whole paper.

Newspapers always excite curiosity. No one ever lays one down without a feeling of disappointment.

What an eternal time that gentleman in black, at Nando's, keeps the paper! I am sick of hearing the waiter bawling out incessantly, "*The Chronicle* is in hand, sir".

[As in these little diurnals I generally skip the Foreign News, the Debates and the Politics, I find the *Morning Herald* by far the most entertaining of them. It is an agreeable miscellany rather than a newspaper.]

Coming into an inn at night—having ordered your supper—what can be more delightful than to find lying in the window-seat, left there time out of mind by the carelessness of some former guest—two or three numbers of the old *Toxen and Country Magazine*, with its amusing *tête-à-tête* pictures—"The Royal Lover and Lady G——"; "The Melting Platonic and the Old Beau",—and such like antiquated scandal? Would you exchange it—at that time, and in that place—for a better book?

Poor Tobin, who latterly fell blind, did not regret it so much for the weightier kinds of

DETACHED THOUGHTS ON

reading—the *Paradise Lost* or *Comus* he could have *read* to him—but he missed the pleasure of skimming over with his own eye a magazine or a light pamphlet.

I should not care to be caught in the serious avenues of some cathedral alone, and reading *Candide*.

I do not remember a more whimsical surprise than having been once detected—by a familiar damsel—reclined at my ease upon the grass, on Primrose Hill (her Cythera), reading—*Pamela*. There was nothing in the book to make a man seriously ashamed at the exposure; but as she seated herself down by me, and seemed determined to read in company, I could have wished it had been—any other book. We read on very sociably for a few pages; and, not finding the author much to her taste, she got up, and—went away. Gentle casuist, I leave it to thee to conjecture whether the blush (for there was one between us) was the property of the nymph or the swain in this dilemma. From me you shall never get the secret.

I am not much a friend to out-of-doors reading. I cannot settle my spirits to it. I knew a Unitarian minister, who was generally to be seen upon Snow Hill (as yet Skinner's-street *was not*) between the hours of ten and eleven in the morning, studying a volume of Lardner. I own this to have been a strain of abstraction beyond my reach. I used to admire how he sidled along, keeping clear of secular contacts. An illiterate encounter with a porter's knot, or a bread basket, would have quickly put to flight

BOOKS AND READING

all the theology I am master of, and have left me worse than indifferent to the five points.

[I was once amused—there is a pleasure in *affecting* affectation—at the indignation of a crowd that was jostling in with me at the pit-door of Covent Garden Theatre, to have a sight of Master Betty—then at once in his dawn and his meridian—in *Hamlet*. I had been invited, quite unexpectedly, to join a party, whom I met near the door of the playhouse, and I happened to have in my hand a large octavo of Johnson and Steevens's *Shakspeare*, which, the time not admitting of my carrying it home, of course went with me to the theatre. Just in the very heat and pressure of the doors opening—the *rush*, as they term it—I deliberately held the volume over my head, open at the scene in which the young Roscius had been most cried up, and quietly read by the lamp-light. The clamour became universal. “The affectation of the fellow,” cried one. “Look at that gentleman *reading*, papa,” squeaked a young lady, who, in her admiration of the novelty, almost forgot her fears. I read on. “He ought to have his book knocked out of his hand,” exclaimed a pursy cit, whose arms were too fast pinioned to his side to suffer him to execute his kind intention. Still I read on—and, all the time came to pay my money, kept as unmoved as Saint Anthony at his holy offices, with the satyrs, apes, and hobgoblins moping and making mouths at him in the picture, while the good man sits as undisturbed at the sight as if he were the sole

DETACHED THOUGHTS ON

tenant of the desert.—The individual rabble (I recognized more than one of their ugly faces) had damned a slight piece of mine a few nights before, and I was determined the culprits should not a second time put me out of countenance.]

There is a class of street readers whom I can never contemplate without affection—the poor gentry who, not having wherewithal to buy or hire a book, filch a little learning at the open stalls—the owner, with his hard eye, casting envious looks at them all the while, and thinking when they will have done. Venturing tenderly, page after page, expecting every moment when he shall interpose his interdict, and yet unable to deny themselves the gratification, they “snatch a fearful joy” he Martin B——, in this way, by daily fragments got through two volumes of *Clarissa*, when the stall-keeper damped his laudable ambition by asking him (it was in his younger days) whether he meant to purchase the work. M. declares, that under no circumstance in his life did he ever peruse a book with half the satisfaction which he took in those uneasy snatches. A quaint poetess of our day has moralized upon this subject in two very touching but homely stanzas :

I saw a boy with eager eye
Open a book upon a stall,
And read, as he'd devour it all :
Which, when the stall-man did espy,
Soon to the boy I heard him call,
“You Sir, you never buy a book,

BOOKS AND READING

Therefore in one you shall not look".
The boy pass'd slowly on, and with a sigh
He wish'd he never had been taught to read,
Then of the old churl's books he should have had
no need.

Of sufferings the poor have many,
Which never can the rich annoy :
I soon perceived another boy,
Who look'd as if he had not any
Food, for that day at least—enjoy
The sight of cold meat in a tavern larder.
This boy's case, then thought I, is surely harder,
Thus hungry, longing, thus without a penny,
Beholding choice of dainty-dressed meat :
No wonder if he wish he ne'er had learn'd to eat.

Stage Illusion

A play is said to be well or ill acted in proportion to the scenical illusion produced. Whether such illusion can in any case be perfect, is not the question. The nearest approach to it, we are told, is when the actor appears wholly unconscious of the presence of spectators. In tragedy—in all which is to affect the feelings—this undivided attention to his stage business seems indispensable. Yet it is, in fact, dispensed with every day by our cleverest tragedians; and while these references to an audience, in the shape of rant or sentiment, are not too frequent or palpable, a sufficient quantity of illusion for the purposes of dramatic interest may be said to be produced in spite of them. But, tragedy apart, it may be enquired whether, in certain characters in comedy, especially those which are a little extravagant, or which involve some notion repugnant to the moral sense, it is not a proof of the highest skill in the comedian when, without absolutely appealing to an audience, he keeps up a tacit understanding with them; and makes them, unconsciously to themselves, a party in the scene. The utmost nicety is required in the mode of doing this; but we speak only of the great artists in the profession.

STAGE ILLUSION

The most mortifying infirmity in human nature to feel in ourselves, or to contemplate in another, is, perhaps, cowardice. To see a coward *done to the life* upon a stage would produce anything but mirth. Yet we most of us remember Jack Bannister's cowards. Could anything be more agreeable, more pleasant? We loved the rogues. How was this effected but by the exquisite art of the actor in a perpetual sub-insinuation to us, the spectators, even in the extremity of the shaking fit, that he was not half such a coward as we took him for? We saw all the common symptoms of the malady upon him; the quivering lip, the cowering knees, the teeth chattering; and could have sworn "that man was frightened". But we forgot all the while—or kept it almost a secret to ourselves—that he never once lost his self-possession; that he let out, by a thousand droll looks and gestures—meant at *us*, and not at all supposed to be visible to his fellows in the scene, that his confidence in his own resources had never once deserted him. Was this a genuine picture of a coward? or not rather a likeness, which the clever artist contrived to palm upon us instead of an original; while we secretly connived at the delusion for the purpose of greater pleasure, than a more genuine counterfeiting of the Imbecility, helplessness, and utter self-desertion, which we know to be concomitants of cowardice in real life, could have given us?

Why are misers so hateful in the world, and so endurable on the stage, but because the

STAGE ILLUSION

skilful actor, by a sort of sub-reference, rather than direct appeal to us, disarms the character of a great deal of its odiousness, by seeming to engage *our* compassion for the insecure tenure by which he holds his money-bags and parchments? By this subtle vent half of the hatefulness of the character—the self-closeness with which in real life it coils itself up from the sympathies of men—evaporates. The miser becomes sympathetic; *i.e.*, is no genuine miser. Here again a diverting likeness is substituted for a very disagreeable reality.

Spleen, irritability—the pitiable infirmities of old men, which produce only pain to behold in the realities, counterfeited upon a stage, divert not altogether for the comic appendages to them, but in part from an inner conviction that they are *being acted* before us; that a likeness only is going on, and not the thing itself. They please by being done under the life, or beside it; not *to the life*. When Gatty acts an old man, is he angry indeed? or only a pleasant counterfeit, just enough of a likeness to recognize, without pressing upon us the uneasy sense of a reality?

Comedians, paradoxical as it may seem, may be too natural. It was the case with a late actor. Nothing could be more earnest or true than the manner of Mr. Emery; this told excellently in his Tyke, and characters of a tragic cast. But when he carried the same rigid exclusiveness of attention to the stage business, and wilful blindness and oblivion of everything before the curtain into his comedy,

STAGE ILLUSION

it produced a harsh and dissonant effect. He was out of keeping with the rest of the *dramatis personæ*. There was as little link between him and them, as betwixt himself and the audience. He was a third estate—dry, repulsive, and unsocial to all. Individually considered, his execution was masterly. But comedy is not this unbending thing; for this reason, that the same degree of credibility is not required of it as to serious scenes. The degrees of credibility demanded to the two things may be illustrated by the different sort of truth which we expect when a man tells us a mournful or a merry story. If we suspect the former of falsehood in any one tittle, we reject it altogether. Our tears refuse to flow at a suspected imposition. But the teller of a mirthful tale has latitude allowed him. We are content with less than absolute truth. 'Tis the same with dramatic illusion. We confess we love in comedy to see an audience naturalized behind the scenes—taken into the interest of the drama, welcomed as by-standers, however. There is something ungracious in a comic actor holding himself aloof from all participation or concern with those who are come to be diverted by him. Macbeth must see the dagger, and no ear but his own be told of it; but an old fool in farce may think he *sees something*, and by conscious words and looks express it, as plainly as he can speak, to pit, box, and gallery. When an impertinent in tragedy, an Osric, for instance, breaks in upon the serious passions of the scene, we approve of the con-

STAGE ILLUSION

tempt with which he is treated. But when the pleasant impertinent of comedy, in a piece purely meant to give delight, and raise mirth out of whimsical perplexities, worries the studious man with taking up his leisure, or making his house his home, the same sort of contempt expressed (however *natural*) would destroy the balance of delight in the spectators. To make the intrusion comic, the actor who plays the annoyed man must a little desert nature; he must, in short, be thinking of the audience, and express only so much dissatisfaction and peevishness as is consistent with the pleasure of comedy. In other words, his perplexity must seem half put on. If he repel the intruder with the sober set face of a man in earnest, and more especially if he deliver his expostulations in a tone which in the world must necessarily provoke a duel, his real-life manner will destroy the whimsical and purely dramatic existence of the other character (which to render it comic demands an antagonist comicality on the part of the character opposed to it), and convert what was meant for mirth, rather than belief, into a downright piece of impertinence indeed, which would raise no diversion in us, but rather stir pain, to see inflicted in earnest upon any unworthy person. A very judicious actor (in most of his parts) seems to have fallen into an error of this sort in his playing with Mr. Wrench in the farce of *Free and Easy*.

Many instances would be tedious; may suffice to show that comic acting a*

STAGE ILLUSION

does not always demand from the performer that strict abstraction from all reference to an audience which is exacted of it; but that in some cases a sort of compromise may take place, and all the purposes of dramatic delight be attained by a judicious understanding, not too openly announced, between the ladies and gentlemen—on both sides of the curtain.

To the Shade of Elliston

Joyousest of once embodied spirits, whither at length hast thou flown? to what genial region are we permitted to conjecture that thou hast flitted?

Art thou sowing thy WILD OATS yet (the harvest-time was still to come with thee) upon casual sands of Avernus? or art thou enacting ROVER (as we would gladlier think) by wandering Elysian streams?

This mortal frame, while thou didst play thy brief antics amongst us, was in truth anything but a prison to thee, as the vain Platonist dreams of this *body* to be no better than a county gaol, forsooth, or some house of durance vile, whereof the five senses are the fetters.

• Thou knewest better than to be in a hurry to cast off those gyves; and had notice to quit, I fear, before thou wert quite ready to abandon this fleshy tenement. It was thy Pleasure-House, thy Palace of Dainty Devices: thy Louvre, or thy White-Hall.

What new mysterious lodgings dost thou tenant now? or when may we expect thy ærial house-warming?

Tartarus we know, and we have read of the

TO THE SHADE OF ELLISTON

Blessed Shades ; now cannot I intelligibly fancy thee in either.

Is it too much to hazard a conjecture that (as the schoolmen admitted a receptacle apart for Patriarchs and unchrisom babes) there may exist—not far perchance from that storehouse of all vanities, which Milton saw in visions—a LIMBO somewhere for PLAYERS ? and that

Up thither like aerial vapours fly
Both all Stage things, and all that in Stage things
Built their fond hopes of glory, or lasting fame?
All the unaccomplished works of Authors' hands,
Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly mixed,
Damn'd upon earth, fleet thither—
Play, Opera, Farce, with all their trumpery.—

There, by the neighbouring moon (by some not improperly supposed thy Regent Planet upon earth), mayst thou not still be acting thy managerial pranks, great disembodied Lessee ? but Lessee still, and still a Manager.

In Green Rooms, impervious to mortal eye, the muse beholds thee wielding posthumous empire.

Thin ghosts of Figurantes (never plump on earth) circle thee in endlessly, and still their song is *Fie on sinful Phantasy !*

Magnificent were thy capriccios on this globe of earth, ROBERT WILLIAM ELLISTON ! for as yet we know not thy new name in heaven.

It irks me to think that, stript of thy regalities, thou shouldst ferry over, a poor forked shade, in crazy Stygian wherry. Methinks I hear the old boatman, paddling by the weedy

TO THE SHADE OF ELLISTON

wharf, with raucid voice, bawling "SCULLS, SCULLS!" to which, with waving hand and majestic action, thou deignest no reply, other than in two curt monosyllables, "No: OARS".

But the laws of Pluto's kingdom know small difference between king, and cobbler; manager, and call-boy; and, if haply your dates of life were conterminant, you are quietly taking your passage, cheek by cheek (O ignoble levelling of Death) with the shade of some recently departed candle-snuffer.

But mercy! what strippings, what tearing off of histrionic robes, and private vanities! what denudations to the bone, before the surly Ferryman will admit you to set a foot within his battered lighter.

Crowns, sceptres; shield, sword, and truncheon; thy own coronation robes (for thou hast brought the whole property-man's wardrobe with thee, enough to sink a navy); the judge's ermine; the coxcomb's wig; the snuff-box *à la Foppington*—all must overboard, he positively swears—and that Ancient Mariner brooks no denial; for, since the tiresome monodrame of the old Thracian Harper, Charon, it is to be believed, hath shown small taste for theatricals.

Ay, now 'tis done. You are just boat-weight; *pura et puta anima*.

But, bless me, how *little* you look!

So shall we all look—kings and keysars—stript for the last voyage.

But the murky rogue pushes off. Adieu, pleasant, and thrice pleasant shade! with my

TO THE SHADE OF ELLISTON

parting thanks for many a heavy hour of life lightened by thy harmless extravaganzas, public or domestic.

Rhadamanthus, who tries the lighter causes below, leaving to his two brethren the heavy calendars—honest Rhadamanth, always partial to players, weighing their parti-coloured existence here upon earth,—making account of the few foibles that may have shaded thy *real life*, as we call it (though, substantially, scarcely less a vapour than thy idlest vagaries upon the boards of Drury), as but of so many echoes, natural re-percussions, and results to be expected from the assumed extravagancies of thy *secondary* or *mock life*, nightly upon a stage—after a lenient castigation with rods lighter than of those Medusean ringlets, but just enough to “whip the offending Adam out of thee”—shall courteously dismiss thee at the right hand gate—the o. p. side of Hades—that conducts to masques and merry-makings in the Theatre Royal of Proserpine.

PLAUDITO, ET VALETO.

Ellistoniana

My acquaintance with the pleasant creature, whose loss we all deplore, was but slight.

My first introduction to E., which afterwards ripened into an acquaintance a little on this side of intimacy, was over a counter in the Leamington Spa Library, then newly entered upon by a branch of his family. E., whom nothing misbecame,—to auspicate, I suppose, the filial concern, and set it a-going with a lustre—was serving in person two damsels fair, who had come into the shop ostensibly to enquire for some new publication, but in reality to have a sight of the illustrious shopman, hoping some conference. With what an air did he reach down the volume, dispassionately giving his opinion of the worth of the work in question, and launching out into a dissertation on its comparative merits with those of certain publications of a similar stamp, its rivals! his enchanted customers fairly hanging on his lips, subdued to their authoritative sentence. So have I seen a gentleman in comedy *acting* the shopman. So Lovelace sold his gloves in King-street. I admired the histrionic art by which he contrived to carry clean away every notion of disgrace from the occupation he had

ELLISTONIANA

so generously submitted to; and from that hour I judged him, with no after repentance, to be a person with whom it would be a felicity to be more acquainted.

To descant upon his merits as a Comedian would be superfluous. With his blended private and professional habits alone I have to do; that harmonious fusion of the manners of the player into those of everyday life, which brought the stage boards into streets and dining-parlours, and kept up the play when the play was ended.—“I like Wrench,” a friend was saying to him one day, “because he is the same natural, easy creature, *on* the stage, that he is *off*.” “My case exactly,” retorted Elliston—with a charming forgetfulness that the converse of a proposition does not always lead to the same conclusion—“I am the same person *off* the stage that I am *on*.” The inference, at first sight, seems identical; but examine it a little, and it confesses only, that the one performer was never, and the other always, *acting*.

And in truth this was the charm of Elliston's private deportment. You had spirited performance always going on before your eyes, with nothing to pay. As where a monarch takes up his casual abode for a night, the poorest hovel which he honours by his sleeping in it, becomes *ipso facto* for that time a palace; so wherever Elliston walked, sate, or stood still, there was the theatre. He carried about with him his pit, boxes, and galleries, and set up his portable playhouse at corners

of streets and in the market-places. Upon flintiest pavements he trod the boards still; and if his theme chanced to be passionate, the green baize carpet of tragedy spontaneously rose beneath his feet. Now this was hearty, and showed a love for his art. So Apelles *always* painted—in thought. So G. D. *always* poetizes. I hate a lukewarm artist. I have known actors—and some of them of Elliston's own stamp—who shall have agreeably been amusing you in the part of a rake or a coxcomb, through the two or three hours of their dramatic existence; but no sooner does the curtain fall with its leaden clatter, but a spirit of lead seems to seize on all their faculties. They emerge sour, morose persons, intolerable to their families, servants, &c. Another shall have been expanding your heart with generous deeds and sentiments, till it even beats with yearnings of universal sympathy; you absolutely long to go home and do some good action. The play seems tedious, till you can get fairly out of the house, and realize your laudable intentions. At length the final bell rings, and this cordial representative of all that is amiable in human breasts steps forth—a miser. Elliston was more of a piece. Did he *play* Ranger? and did Ranger fill the general bosom of the town with satisfaction? why should *he* not be Ranger, and diffuse the same cordial satisfaction among his private circles? with *his* temperament, *his* animal spirits, *his* good-nature, *his* follies perchance, could he do better than identify himself with his impersonation? Are

we to like a pleasant rake, or coxcomb, on the stage, and give ourselves airs of aversion for the identical character presented to us in actual life? or what would the performer have gained by divesting himself of the impersonation? Could the man Elliston have been essentially different from his part, even if he had avoided to reflect to us studiously, in private circles, the airy briskness, the forwardness, and 'scape-goat trickeries of his prototype?

"But there is something not natural in this everlasting *acting*; we want the real man."

Are you quite sure that it is not the man himself, whom you cannot, or will not see, under some adventitious trappings, which, nevertheless, sit not at all inconsistently upon him? What if it is the nature of some men to be highly artificial? The fault is least reprehensible in *players*. Cibber was his own Foppington, with almost as much wit as Vanbrugh could add to it.

"My conceit of his person",—it is Ben Jonson speaking of Lord Bacon,—"was never increased towards him by his *place* or *honours*. But I have, and do reverence him for the *greatness*, that was only proper to himself; in that he seemed to me ever one of the *greatest* men, that had been in many ages. In his adversity I ever prayed that heaven would give him strength; for *greatness* he could not want."

The quality here commended was scarcely less conspicuous in the subject of these idle reminiscences than in my Lord Verulam. Those who have imagined that an unexpected

elevation to the direction of a great London Theatre affected the consequence of Elliston, or at all changed his nature, knew not the essential *greatness* of the man whom they disparage. It was my fortune to encounter him near St. Dunstan's Church (which, with its punctual giants, is now no more than dust and a shadow) on the morning of his election to that high office. Grasping my hand with a look of significance, he only uttered,—“Have you heard the news?”—then with another look following up the blow, he subjoined, “I am the future Manager of Drury Lane Theatre”.—Breathless as he saw me, he stayed not for congratulation or reply, but mutely stalked away, leaving me to chew upon his new-blown dignities at leisure. In fact, nothing could be said to it. Expressive silence alone could muse his praise. This was in his *great* style.

But was he less *great* (be witness, O ye powers of Equanimity, that supported in the ruins of Carthage the consular exile, and more recently transmuted, for a more illustrious exile, the barren constableness of Elba into an image of Imperial France), when, in melancholy after-years, again, much nearer the same spot, I met him, when that sceptre had been wrested from his hand, and his dominion was curtailed to the petty managership, and part proprietorship, of the small Olympic, *his Elba*? He still played nightly upon the boards of Drury, but in parts, alas! allotted to him, not magnificently distributed by him. Waiving his great loss as nothing, and magnificently sinking the sense

ELLISTONIANA

of fallen *material* grandeur in the more liberal resentment of depreciations done to his more lofty *intellectual* pretensions, "Have you heard" (his customary exordium)—"have you heard", said he, "how they treat me? they put me in *comedy*". Thought I—but his finger on his lips forbade any verbal interruption—"where could they have put you better?" Then, after a pause—"Where I formerly played Romeo, I now play Mercutio,"—and so again he stalked away, neither staying, nor caring for, responses.

O, it was a rich scene,—but Sir A——C——, the best of story-tellers and surgeons, who mends a lame narrative almost as well as he sets a fracture, alone could do justice to it,—that I was a witness to, in the tarnished room (that had once been green) of that same little Olympic. There, after his deposition from Imperial Drury, he substituted a throne. That Olympic Hill was his "highest heaven"; himself "Jove in his chair". There he sat in state, while before him, on complaint of prompter, was brought for judgment—how shall I describe her?—one of those little tawdry things that flirt at the tails of choruses—a probationer for the town, in neither of its senses—the pertest little drab—a dirty fringe and appendage of the lamp's smoke,—who, it seems, on some disapprobation expressed by a "highly respectable" audience—had precipitately quitted her station on the boards, and withdrawn her small talents in disgust.

"And how dare you," said her manager,—assuming a censorial severity—which would

have crushed the confidence of a Vestris, and disarmed that beautiful Rebel herself of her professional caprices — I verily believe, he thought *her* standing before him—"how dare you, Madam, withdraw yourself, without a notice, from your theatrical duties?" "I was hissed, Sir." "And you have the presumption to decide upon the taste of the town?" "I don't know that, Sir, but I will never stand to be hissed," was the subjoinder of young Confidence—when gathering up his features into one significant mass of wonder, pity, and expostulatory indignation—in a lesson never to have been lost upon a creature less forward than she who stood before him—his words were these: "They have hissed *me*".

'Twas the identical argument *à fortiori*, which the son of Pelcus uses to Lycaon trembling under his lance, to persuade him to take his destiny with a good grace. "I too am mortal." And it is to be believed that in both cases the rhetoric missed of its application, for want of a proper understanding with the faculties of the respective recipients.

- "Quite an Opera pit," he said to me, as he was courteously conducting me over the benches of his Surrey Theatre, the last retreat, and recess, of his every-day waning grandeur.

Those who knew Elliston, will know the *manner* in which he pronounced the latter sentence of the few words I am about to record. One proud day to me he took his roast mutton with us in the Temple, to which I had super-added a preliminary haddock. After a rather

ELLISTONIANA

plentiful partaking of the meagre banquet, not unrefreshed with the humbler sort of liquors, I made a sort of apology for the humility of the fare, observing that for my own part I never ate but of one dish at dinner. "I too never eat but one thing at dinner,"—was his reply—then after a pause—"reckoning fish as nothing." The manner was all. It was as if by one peremptory sentence he had decreed the annihilation of all the savoury esculents, which the pleasant and nutritious-food-giving Ocean pours forth upon poor humans from her watery bosom. This was *greatness*, tempered with considerate *tenderness* to the feelings of his scanty but welcoming entertainer.

Great wert thou in thy life, Robert William Elliston! and *not lessened* in thy death, if report speak truly, which says that thou didst direct that thy mortal remains should repose under no inscription but one of pure *Latinity*. Classical was thy bringing up! and beautiful was the feeling on thy last bed, which, connecting the man with the boy, took thee back to thy latest exercise of imagination, to the days when, undreaming of Theatres and Managements, thou wert a scholar, and an early ripe one, under the roofs builded by the munificent and pious Colet. For thee the Pauline Muses weep. In elegies, that shall silence this crude prose, they shall celebrate thy praise.

The Old Margate Hoy

I am fond of passing my vacations (I believe I have said so before) at one or other of the Universities. Next to these my choice would fix me at some woody spot, such as the neighbourhood of Henley affords in abundance, on the banks of my beloved Thames. But somehow or other my cousin contrives to wheedle me, once in three or four seasons, to a watering-place. Old attachments cling to her in spite of experience. We have been dull at Worthing one summer, duller at Brighton another, dullest at Eastbourn a third, and are at this moment doing dreary penance at—Hastings!—and all because we were happy many years ago for a brief week at Margate. That was our first sea-side experiment, and many circumstances combined to make it the most agreeable holiday of my life. We had neither of us seen sea, and we had never been from home together in company.

Can I forget thee, thou old Margate hearty, with thy weather-beaten, sun-burnt face into and his rough accommodations—ill, believe, for the foppery and fresh-water nit. Not the modern steam-packet? To the command waves thou committedest thy set

THE OLD MARGATE HOY

freightage, and didst ask no aid of magic fumes, and spells, and boiling cauldrons. With the gales of heaven thou wentest swimmingly; or, when it was their pleasure, stoodest still with sailor-like patience. Thy course was natural, not forced, as in a hot-bed; nor didst thou go poisoning the breath of ocean with sulphureous smoke—a great sea chimera, chimneying and furnacing the deep; or liker to that fire-god parching up Scamander.

Can I forget thy honest, yet slender crew, with their coy reluctant responses (yet to the suppression of anything like contempt) to the raw questions which we of the great city would be ever and anon putting to them, as to the uses of this or that strange naval implement? Specially can I forget thee, thou happy medium, thou shade of refuge between us and them, conciliating interpreter of their skill to our simplicity, comfortable ambassador between sea and land!—whose sailor-trousers did not more convincingly assure thee to be an adopted denizen of the former, than thy white cap, and lawhiter apron over them, with thy neat-fingered whetstone in thy culinary vocation, bespoke thee ships, we been of inland nurture heretofore—a one, undrunk of Eastcheap? How busily didst thou, in thy multifarious occupation, cook, In attendant, chamberlain: here, there, they, thy Ariel, flaming at once about all the deck, yet with kindlier ministrations to assist the tempest, but, as if with a kinder sense of our infirmities, the qualms which that untried motion

THE OLD MARGATE HOY

might haply raise in our crude land-fancies. And when the o'erwashing billows drove us below deck (for it was far gone in October, and we had stiff and blowing weather), how did thy officious ministrings, still catering for our comfort, with cards, and cordials, and thy more cordial conversation, alleviate the closeness and the confinement of thy else (truth to say) not very savoury, nor very inviting, little cabin!

With these additaments to boot, we had on board a fellow-passenger whose discourse in verity might have beguiled a longer voyage than we meditated, and have made mirth and wonder abound as far as the Azores. He was a dark, Spanish-complexioned young man, remarkably handsome, with an officer-like assurance, and an insuppressible volubility of assertion. He was, in fact, the greatest liar I had met with then, or since. He was none of your hesitating, half story-tellers (a most painful description of mortals) who go on sounding your belief, and only giving you as much as they see you can swallow at a time—the nibbling pickpockets of your patience—but one who committed downright, daylight depredations upon his neighbour's faith. He did not stand shivering upon the brink, but was a hearty, thorough-paced liar, and plunged at once into the depths of your credulity. I partly believe, he made pretty sure of his company. Not many rich, not many wise, or learned, composed at that time the common stowage of a Margate packet. We were, I am afraid, a set

THE OLD MARGATE HOY

of as unseasoned Londoners (let our enemies give it a worse name) as Aldermanbury, or Watling-street, at that time of day could have supplied. There might be an exception or two among us, but I scorn to make any invidious distinctions among such a jolly, companionable ship's company as those were whom I sailed with. Something too must be conceded to the *Genius Loci*. Had the confident fellow told us half the legends on land which he favoured us with on the other element, I flatter myself the good sense of most of us would have revolted. But we were in a new world, with everything unfamiliar about us, and the time and place disposed us to the reception of any prodigious marvel whatsoever. Time has obliterated from my memory much of his wild fablings; and the rest would appear but dull, as written, and to be read on shore. He had been Aide-de-camp (among other rare accidents and fortunes) to a Persian Prince, and at one blow had stricken off the head of the King of Carimania on horseback. He, of course, married the Prince's daughter. I forget what unlucky turn in the politics of that court, combining with the loss of his consort, was the reason of his quitting Persia; but with the rapidity of a magician he transported himself, along with his hearers, back to England, where we still found him in the confidence of great ladies. There was some story of a Princess—Elizabeth, if I remember—having entrusted to his care an extraordinary casket of jewels, upon some extraordinary occasion—but, as I am not

THE OLD MARGATE HOY

certain of the name or circumstance at this distance of time, I must leave it to the Royal daughters of England to settle the honour among themselves in private. I cannot call to mind half his pleasant wonders; but I perfectly remember that, in the course of his travels, he had seen a phoenix; and he obligingly undeceived us of the vulgar error that there is but one of that species at a time, assuring us that they were not uncommon in some parts of Upper Egypt. Hitherto he had found the most implicit listeners. His dreaming fancies had transported us beyond the "ignorant present". But when (still hardying more and more in his triumphs over our simplicity) he went on to affirm that he had actually sailed through the legs of the Colossus at Rhodes, it really became necessary to make a stand. And here I must do justice to the good sense and intrepidity of one of our party, a youth, that had hitherto been one of his most deferential auditors, who, from his recent reading, made bold to assure the gentleman that there must be some mistake, as "the Colossus in question ~~had~~ been destroyed long since"; to whose opinion, delivered with all modesty, our hero was obliging enough to concede thus much, that "the figure was indeed a little damaged". This was the only opposition he met with, and it did not at all seem to stagger him, for he proceeded with his fables, which the same youth appeared to swallow with still more complacency than ever,—confirmed, as it were, by the extreme candour of that concession.

THE OLD MARGATE HOY

With these prodigies he wheedled us on till we came in sight of the Reculvers, which one of our own company (having been the voyage before) immediately recognizing, and pointing out to us, was considered by us as no ordinary seaman.

All this time sat upon the edge of the deck quite a different character. It was a lad, apparently very poor, very infirm, and very patient. His eye was ever on the sea, with a smile; and if he caught now and then some snatches of these wild legends, it was by accident, and they seemed not to concern him. The waves to him whispered more pleasant stories. He was as one, being with us, but not of us. He heard the bell of dinner ring without stirring; and when some of us pulled out our private stores — our cold meat and our salads—he produced none, and seemed to want none. Only a solitary biscuit he had laid in; provision for the one or two days and nights, to which these vessels then were oftentimes obliged to prolong their voyage. Upon a nearer acquaintance with him, which he seemed neither to court nor decline, we learned that he was going to Margate, with the hope of being admitted into the Infirmary there for sea-bathing. His disease was a scrofula, which appeared to have eaten all over him. He expressed great hopes of a cure; and when we asked him whether he had any friends where he was going, he replied, “he *had* no friends”.

These pleasant, and some mournful passages, with the first sight of the sea, co-operating

THE OLD MARGATE HOY

with youth, and a sense of holidays and out-of-door adventure, to me that had been pent up in populous cities for many months before,—have left upon my mind the fragrance as of summer days gone by, bequeathing nothing but their remembrance for cold and wintry hours to chew upon.

Will it be thought a digression (it may spare some unwelcome comparisons) if I endeavour to account for the *dissatisfaction* which I have heard so many persons confess to have felt (as I did myself feel in part on this occasion), *at the sight of the sea for the first time*? I think the reason usually given — referring to the incapacity of actual objects for satisfying our preconceptions of them — scarcely goes deep enough into the question. Let the same person see a lion, an elephant, a mountain for the first time in his life, and he shall perhaps feel himself a little mortified. The things do not fill up that space which the idea of them seemed to take up in his mind. But they have still a correspondency to his first notion, and in time grow up to it, so as to produce a very similar impression: enlarging themselves (if I may say so) upon familiarity. But the sea remains a disappointment.—Is it not, that in *the latter* we had expected to behold (absurdly, I grant, but, I am afraid, by the law of imagination, unavoidably) not a definite object, as those wild beasts, or that mountain compassable by the eye, but *all the sea at once*, THE COMMENSURATE ANTAGONIST OF THE EARTH? I do not say we tell ourselves so much, but the craving

THE OLD MARGATE HOY

of the mind is to be satisfied with nothing less. I will suppose the case of a young person of fifteen (as I then was) knowing nothing of the sea but from description. He comes to it for the first time—all that he has been reading of it all his life, and *that* the most enthusiastic part of life,—all he has gathered from narratives of wandering seamen,—what he has gained from true voyages, and what he cherishes as credulously from romance and poetry,—crowding their images, and exacting strange tributes from expectation.—He thinks of the great deep, and of those who go down unto it; of its thousand isles, and of the vast continents it washes; of its receiving the mighty Plata, or Orellana, into its bosom, without disturbance, or sense of augmentation; of Biscay swells, and the mariner

For many a day, and many a dreadful night,
Incessant labouring round the stormy Cape;

of fatal rocks, and the “still-vexed Bermoothes”; of great whirlpools, and the water-spout; of sunken ships, and sumless treasures swallowed up in the unrestoring depths; of fishes and quaint monsters, to which all that is terrible on earth—

Be but as bugbs to frighten babes withal,
Compared with the creatures in the sea's⁶ entral;

of naked savages, and Juan Fernandez; of pearls, and shells; of coral beds, and of enchanted isles; of mermaids' grots—

THE OLD MARGATE HOY

I do not assert that in sober earnest he expects to be shown all these wonders at once, but he is under the tyranny of a mighty faculty, which haunts him with confused hints and shadows of all these; and when the actual object opens first upon him, seen (in tame weather, too, most likely) from our unromantic coasts—a speck, a slip of sea-water, as it shows to him—what can it prove but a very unsatisfying and even diminutive entertainment? Or if he has come to it from the mouth of a river, was it much more than the river widening? and, even out of sight of land, what had he but a flat watery horizon about him, nothing comparable to the vast o’er-curtaining sky, his familiar object, seen daily without dread or amazement?—Who, in similar circumstances, has not been tempted to exclaim with Charoba, in the poem of Gebir,

Is this the mighty ocean? is this *all*?

I love town or country; but this detestable Cinque Port is neither. I hate these scrubbed shoots, thrusting out their starved foliage from between the horrid fissures of dusty innutritious rocks; which the amateur calls “verdure to the edge of the sea”. I require woods, and they show me stunted coppices. I cry out for the water-brooks, and pant for fresh streams and inland murmurs. I cannot stand all day on the naked beach, watching the capricious hues of the sea, shifting like the colours of a dying mullet. I am tired of looking out at the

THE OLD MARGATE HOY

windows of this island-prison. I would fain retire into the interior of my cage. While I gaze upon the sea, I want to be on it, over it, across it. It binds me in with chains, as of iron. My thoughts are abroad. I should not so feel in Staffordshire. There is no home for me here. There is no sense of home at Hastings. It is a place of fugitive resort, an heterogeneous assemblage of sea-mews and stock-brokers, Amphitrites of the town, and misses that coquet with the Ocean. If it were that it was in its primitive shape, and what it might have remained, a fair, honest fishing-town, and no more, it were something—with a few straggling fishermen's huts scattered about, artless as its cliffs, and with their materials filched from them, it were something. I could abide to dwell with Meshech; to assort with fisher-swains and smugglers. There are, or I dream there are, many of this latter occupation here. Their faces become the place. I like a smuggler. He is the only honest thief. He robs nothing but the revenue—an abstraction I never greatly cared about. I could go out with them in their mackerel boats, or about their less ostensible business, with some satisfaction. I can even tolerate those poor victims to monotony, who from day to day pace along the beach, in endless progress and recurrence, to watch their illicit countrymen—townsfolk or brethren, perchance—whistling to the sheathing and unsheathing of their cutlasses (their only solace), who, under the mild name of preventive service, keep up

THE OLD MARGATE MOY

a legitimated civil warfare in the deplorable absence of a foreign one, to show their detestation of ran hollandis, and zeal for Old England. But it is the visitants from town, that come here to say that they have been here, with no more relish of the sea than a pond perch or a dace might be supposed to have, that are my aversion. I feel like a foolish dace in these regions, and have as little toleration for myself here as for them. What can they want here? If they had a true relish of the ocean, why ^{hither} they brought all this land luggage with the ^{ing?} or why pitch their civilized tents in the desert? What mean these scanty book-rooms—ma^{m-}libraries as they entitle them—if the sea were as they would have us believe, a book “to read a strange matter in”? what are their foolish concert-rooms, if they come, as they would fain be thought to do, to listen to the music of the waves? All is false and hollow pretension. They come because it is the fashion, and to spoil the nature of the place. They are mostly, as I have said, stock-brokers; but I have watched the better sort of them—now and then, an honest citizen (of the old stamp), in the simplicity of his heart, shall bring down his wife and daughters to taste the sea breezes. I always know the date of their arrival. It is easy to see it in their countenance. A day or two they go wandering on the shingles, picking up cockle-shells, and thinking them great things; but, in a poor week, imagination slackens: they begin to discover that cockles produce no pearls, and then—O then!—if I could interpret for

THE OLD MARGATE HOY

the pretty creatures (I know they have not the courage to confess it themselves), how gladly would they exchange their sea-side rambles for a Sunday walk on the green-sward of their accustomed Twickenham meadows!

I would ask one of these sea-charmed emigrants, who think they truly love the sea, with its wild usages, what would their feelings be if some of the unsophisticated aborigines of this place, encouraged by their courteous questionings here, should venture, on the faith of such assured sympathy between them, to return the fit and come up to see—London. I must imagine them with their fishing-tackle on their wharf, as we carry our town necessities. What a sensation would it cause in Lothbury! What vehement laughter would it not excite among

The daughters of Cheapside, and wives of Lombard-street!

I am sure that no town-bred or inland-born subjects can feel their true and natural nourishment at these sea-places. Nature, where she does not mean us for mariners and vagabonds, bids us stay at home. The salt foam seems to nourish a spleen. I am not half so good-natured as by the milder waters of my natural river. I would exchange these sea-gulls for swans, and send a swallow for ever about the banks of Thamesis.

The Convalescent

A pretty severe fit of indisposition which, under the name of a nervous fever, has made me a prisoner of me for some weeks past, and but slowly leaving me, has reduced me to an incapacity of reflecting upon any topic foreign to itself. Expect no healthy conclusions from me this month, reader; I can offer you only sick men's dreams.

And truly the whole state of sickness is such for what else is it but a magnificent dream to a man to lie a-bed, and draw daylight curtains about him; and, shutting out the sun, to induce a total oblivion of all the works which are going on under it? To become insensible to all the operations of life, except the beatings of one feeble pulse?

— If there be a regal solitude, it is a sick bed. How the patient lords it there; what caprices he acts without control! how king-like he sways his pillow—tumbling, and tossing, and shifting, and lowering, and thumping, and flattening, and moulding it, to the ever-varying requisitions of his throbbing temples.

He changes *sides* oftener than a politician. Now he lies full length, then half length, obliquely, transversely, head and feet quite

THE CONVALESCENT

across the bed; and none accuses him of tergiversation. Within the four curtains he is absolute. They are his *Mare Clausum*.

How sickness enlarges the dimensions of a man's self to himself! he is his own exclusive object. Supreme selfishness is inculcated upon him as his only duty. 'Tis the Two Tables of the Law to him. He has nothing to think of but how to get well. What passes out of doors, or within them, so he hear not the jargon of them, affects him not. A little while ago he was greatly concerned at the event of a law-suit, which was to be the saving or the marring of his dearest friend. He was to be seen trudging about upon this errand to fifty quarters of the town at five, jogging this witness, refreshing that solicitor. The cause was to come on yesterday. He is absolutely as indifferent to the decision as if it were a question to be tried at Pekin. Peradventure from some whispering going on about the house, not intended for his hearing, he picks up enough to make him understand that things went cross-grained in the court yesterday, and his friend is ruined. But the word "friend" and the word "ruin" disturb him no more than so much jargon. He is not to think of anything but how to get better.

What a world of foreign cares are merged in that absorbing consideration!

He has put on the strong armour of sickness, he is wrapped in the callous hide of suffering; he keeps his sympathy, like some curious vin-

THE CONVALESCENT

tage, under trusty lock and key, for his own use only.

He lies pitying himself, honing and moaning to himself; he yearneth over himself; his bowels are even melted within him, to think what he suffers; he is not ashamed to weep over himself.

He is for ever plotting how to do some good to himself; studying little stratagems and artificial alleviations.

He makes the most of himself; divides himself, by an allowable fiction, into as many distinct individuals as he hath sore and suffering members. Sometimes he meditates of a thing apart from him—upon his aching head, and that dull pain which, day or waking, lay in it all the past night like a palpable substance of pain, not to be removed without opening the very skull, as it seemed to take it thence. Or he pities his long, clammy, attenuated fingers. He compassionates himself all over; and his bed is a very discipline of humanity and tender heart.

He is his own sympathizer; and instinctively feels that none can so well perform that office for him. He cares for few spectators to his tragedy. Only that punctual face of the old nurse pleases him, that announces his broth and his cordials. He likes it because it is so unmoved, and because he can pour forth his feverish ejaculations before it as unreservedly as to his bed-post.

To the world's business he is dead. He understands not what the callings and occupa-

THE CONVALESCENT

tions of mortals are; only he has a glimmering conceit of some such thing, when the doctor makes his daily call: and even in the lines on that busy face he reads no multiplicity of patients, but solely conceives of himself as *the sick man*. To what other uneasy couch the good man is hastening, when he slips out of his chamber, folding up his thin *douceur* so carefully, for fear of rustling—is no speculation though he can at present entertain. He thinks not of the regular return of the same phenomenon at the same hour to-morrow.

He is not troubled by household rumours touch him not. Some *troupe* of murmur, indicative of life going on within the house, soothes him, while he knows not what it is. He is not to know anything, not to think of anything. Servants gliding up or down the distant staircase, treading day upon velvet, gently keep his ear awake, so long as he troubles not himself further than with some feeble guess at their errands. Exact knowledge would be a burthen to him: he can just endure the pressure of conjecture. He opens his eye faintly at the dull stroke of the muffled knocker, and closes it again without asking "Who was it?" He is flattered by a general notion that enquiries are making after him, but he cares not to know the name of the enquirer. In the general stillness and awful hush of the house he lies in state, and feels his sovereignty.

To be sick is to enjoy monarchical prerogatives. Compare the silent tread and quiet ministry, almost by the eye only, with which

THE CONVALESCENT

he is served—with the careless demeanour, the unceremonious goings in and out (slapping of doors, or leaving them open) of the very same attendants, when he is getting a little better—and you will confess that from the bed of sickness (throne let me rather call it) to the elbow-chair of convalescence is a fall from dignity amounting to a deposition.

How convalescence shrinks a man back to his pristine stature! Where is now the *spring* which he occupied so lately in his own, in *his* family's eye?

The scene of his regalities, his sick *room* which was his presence-chamber, where *he* and acted his despotic fancies—how is it reduced to a common bedroom! The trimness of the very bed has something petty and unmeaning about it. It is *made* every day. How unlike that wavy, many-furrowed, oceanic surface which it presented so short a time since, when to *make* it was a service not to be thought of at oftener than three or four day revolutions, when the patient was with pain and grief to be lifted for a little while out of it, to submit to the encroachments of unwelcome neatness and decencies which his shaken frame deprecated; then to be lifted into it again, for another three or four days' respite, to flounder it out of shape again, while every fresh furrow was an historical record of some shifting posture, some uneasy turning, some seeking for a little ease; and the shrunken skin scarce told a truer story than the crumpled coverlid.

Hushed are those mysterious sighs—those

THE CONVALESCENT

groans—so much more awful, while we knew not from what caverns of vast hidden suffering they proceeded. The Lernean pangs are quenched. The riddle of sickness is solved; and Philoctetes is become an ordinary personage.

Perhaps some relic of the sick man's dream of greatness survives in the still lingering visitations of the medical attendant. But how is he, when changed with everything else! Can this—this man of news—of chat—of anecdote—of everything but physic—can this be he, who so lately came between the patient and his angel enemy, as on some solemn embassy of Nature, erecting herself into a high medical party?—Pshaw! 'tis some old woman. We reweave with him all that made sickness auspicious—the spell that hushed the household day—the desert-like stillness, felt throughout its dearest chambers—the mute attendance—the enquiry by looks—the still softer delicacies of self-attention—the sole and single eye of distemper alone fixed upon itself—world-thoughts excluded—the man a world unto himself—his own theatre—

What a speck is he dwindled into!

In this flat swamp of convalescence, left by the ebb of sickness, yet far enough from the terra-firma of established health, your note, dear Editor, reached me requesting—an article. In *Articulo Mortis*, thought I; but it is something hard—and the quibble, wretched as it

THE CONVALESCENT

was, relieved me. The summons, unseasonable as it appeared, seemed to link me on again to the petty businesses of life, which I had lost sight of; a gentle call to activity, however trivial; a wholesome weaning from that reposerous dream of self-absorption—the puffy state of sickness—in which I confess to have lain so long, insensible to the magazines and monarchies of the world alike; to its laws, and to its literature. The hypochondriac flatness subsiding; the acres, which in imagination had spread over—for the sick man swells in the sole contemplation of his single sufferings—he becomes a Tityus to himself—are wadded to a span; and for the giant of self-importance which I was so lately, you have me once again in my natural pretensions—the lean and mean figure of your insignificant Essayist.

Sanity of True Genius

So far from the position holding true, that of great wit (or genius, in our modern way of speaking) has a necessary alliance with insanity, the greatest wits, on the contrary, will ever be found to be the sanest writers. It is impossible for the mind to conceive of a mad spear. The greatness of wit, by which poetic talent is here chiefly to be understood, manifests itself in the admirable balance of the faculties. Madness is the disproportion, straining or excess of any one of them. "A strong wit", says Cowley, speaking of a poet-friend,

- "——did Nature to him frame,
As all things but his judgment overcame;
His judgment like the heavenly moon did show,
• Tempering that mighty sea below."

The ground of the mistake is, that men, finding in the raptures of the higher poetry a condition of exaltation, to which they have no parallel in their own experience, besides the spurious resemblance of it in dreams and fevers, impute a state of dreaminess and fever to the poet. But the true poet dreams being awake. He is not possessed by his subject, but has

SANITY OF TRUE GENIUS

dominion over it. In the groves of Eden he walks familiar as in his native paths. He ascends the empyrean heaven, and is not intoxicated. He treads the burning marl without dismay; he wins his flight without self-loss through realms of chaos "and old night". Or if, abandoning himself to that severer chaos of a "human mind untuned", he is content awhile to be mad with Lear, or to hate mankind (a sort of madness) with Timon, neither is that madness, nor this misanthropy, so unchecked but that he never letting the reins of reason wholly take the rein, most he seems to do so,—he has his faithful genius still whispering at his ear, with his good servant Kent suggesting saner counsels, or with the honest steward Flavius recommending kinder resolutions. Where he seems most to depart from humanity, he will be found the truest to it. From beyond the scope of Nature to summon possible existences, he subjugates them to the law of her consistency. He is beautifully loyal to that sovereign directress, even when he appears most to betray and desert her. His ideal tribes submit to policy; his very monsters are tamed to his hand, even as that wild sea-brood shepherded by Proteus. He tames and he clothes them with attributes of flesh and blood, till they wonder at themselves, like Indian Islanders forced to submit to European vesture. Caliban, the Witches, are as true to the laws of their own nature (ours with a difference), as Othello, Hamlet, and Macbeth. Herein the great and the little wits are differenced; that if the latter wander

SANITY OF TRUE GENIUS

ever so little from nature or actual existence, they lose themselves and their readers. Their phantoms are lawless; their visions nightmares. They do not create, which implies shaping and consistency. Their imaginations are not active—for to be active is to call something into act and form—but passive, as men in sick dreams. For the supernatural, or something superadded to what we know of nature, they give you plainly non-natural. And if this were all, divine that these mental hallucinations were disenable only in the treatment of subjects higher in nature or transcending it, the judgment might with some plea be pardoned if it ran rise a little, wantonized: but even in the δ of real and everyday life, that which alienates their eyes, one of these lesser wit which is his deviate from nature—show more δ was necessary sequence, which has a natural alliance to bohemian frenzy,—than a great genius in his “maffits”, as Wither somewhere calls them. Where appeal to anyone that is acquainted with the common run of Lane’s novels,—as they existed some twenty or thirty years back,—those scanty intellectual viands of the whole female reading public, till a happier genius arose and expelled for ever the innutritious phantoms,—whether he was not found his brain more “betossed” his memory more puzzled, his sense of where and where more confounded, among the improbable events, the incoherent incidents, the inconsistent characters, or no characters, of some third-rate love-intrigue—where the persons shall be a Lord Glendamour and a Miss

SANITY OF TRUE GENIUS

Rivers, and the scene only alternate between Bath and Bond Street—a more bewildering dreaminess induced upon him than he has felt wandering over all the fairy grounds of Spenser. In the productions we refer to, nothing but names and places is familiar; the persons are neither of this world nor of any other conceivable one; an endless string of activities without purpose, of purposes destitute of motive;—ghostly phantoms in our known walks;—only christened. In the poet we have signs which announce fiction; and we have equally no place at all, for the things and wayward of the *Færie Queene* prate not of their "fith thout". But in their inner nature, and in their kinder speech and actions, we are at once made from acquainted ground. The one leads to it, as a dream; the other to the wildest of the soberies of everyday occurrences. By what subtle art of tracing the mental processes it is effected, we are not philosophers enough to explain, but in that wonderful episode of the cave of Mammon, in which the Money God appears first in the lowest form of a miser, is then a worker of metals, and becomes the god of all the treasures of the world; and has a daughter, Ambition, before whom all the world kneels for favours—with the Hesperian fruit, the waters of Tantalus, with Pilate washing his hands vainly, but not impertinently, in the same stream—that we should be at one moment in the cave of an old hoarder of treasures, at the next at the forge of the Cyclops, in a palace and yet in hell all at once, with the

SANITY OF TRUE GENIUS

shifting mutations of the most rambling dream, and our judgment yet all the time awake, and neither able nor willing to detect the fallacy,—is a proof of that hidden sanity which still guides the poet in the wildest seeming aberrations.

It is not enough to say that the whole episode is a copy of the mind's conceptions in sleep; it is, in some sort—but what a copy! Let the most romantic of us that has been entertained all night with the spectacle of some wildest magnificent vision, recombine it in the morning, and try it by his waking judgment. The vision which appeared so shifting, and yet so consistent while that faculty was passive, when it comes under cool examination shall appear disjointed, less and so unlinked, that we are conscious we have been so deluded; and to us the episode, though but in sleep, a monster for its violence, the transitions in this episode are every one as violent as in the most extravagant dream, yet the waking judgment ratifies them.

Captain Jackson

Among the deaths in our obituary, ^{at} ^{the} ^{mouth} I observe with concern "At ^{the} ^{divert} on the Bath road, Captain Jackson, the other, name and attribution are common. ^{nothing} was a feeling like reproach persuaded positively at could have been no other in ^{if} not seen at ^{the} ^{old} friend, who some five-and-^{on}, he seemed rented a tenement, which he ^a stock of dignity with the appellation ^{is} properly a mile from Westbourn Green ^a not to be good men, and the good turn ^{bounds} by slide out of memory, and are ^{fusion}, the surprise of some such sad ^{even} his wife, which now lies before us ^{who} generally

He whom I mean was a ^{was} not proof officer, with a wife and two grown-up ^{credulity}, whom he maintained with the port ^{of} ^{young} of gentlewomen upon that slender ^{pro-} ^{them} allowance. Comely girls they were too, ^{such}

And was I in danger of forgetting this ^{her}, ^{his} cheerful suppers—the noble tone of ^{her} ^{hospitality}, when first you set your foot in ^{the} ^{cottage}—the anxious ministerings about you, where little or nothing (God knows) was to be ministered.—Althea's horn in a poor platter—

CAPTAIN JACKSON

there was always enough, and leavings: only he would sometimes finish the remainder crust, to show that he wished no savings.

Wine we had none; nor, except on very rare occasions, spirits; but the sensation of wine was there. Some thin kind of ale I remember—"British beverage", he would say! "Push about, my boys"; "Drink to your sweetheart^{or} girls." At every meagre draught a toast ensued, or a song. All the forms of games^{or} diversions were there, with none of the effect^{the other}. Shut your eyes, and you would say^{anything} was a precious bowl of punch was foaming positively at with beams of generous Port or^{not see}, at *the* eating to it from each of the table^{on}, he seemed got flustered, without knowin^d a stock of upon words; and reeled under his properly his unperforming Bacchanalian^s not to be

We had our songs—"Why, bounds by—and the "British Grenadi^{er} fusion.

last we were all obliged to bear even his wife, the daughters sang. Their pro^{who} generally nightly theme—the masters he h^{as} not proof—the "no-expense" which he sp^{as} credulity. plish them in a science "so necessa^{reet} young women". But then—they could insensible "without the instrument". en them

Sacred, and by me never-to-be-violated, such of Poverty! Should I disclose your fancy, aims^{at} grandeur, your makeshift efforts^{at} magnificence? Sleep, sleep, with all thy broke keys, if one of the bunch be extant; thrummed by a thousand ancestral thumbs; dear, cracked spinnet of dearer Louisa! Without mentio

CAPTAIN JACKSON

of mine, be dumb, thou thin accompanier of her thinner warble! A veil be spread over the dear delighted face of the well-deluded father, who now haply listening to cherubic notes, scarce feels sincerer pleasure than when she awakened thy time-shaken chords responsive to the twitterings of that slender image of voice.

... were not without our literary talk either. It did not extend far, but as far as it went, it was bottomed well; had good ground upon. In *the cottage* was a room, authenticated to have been the study of John Glover, in his occasional retirement. It contained the greater part of his library, and the circumstance was nightly talked of by one of the present inmates, who, however, appeared ever to have been in question. But that was never had written there, and the name was pressed into the account of the place. It diffused a learned air to the apartment, the little side casement (poet's study window), opening gave view as far as the pretty spire of the tower domains and patrimonial acres, and no square yard whereof our host had not his own, yet gave occasion to an immoderate expansion of—vanity shall I call it?—in his bosom, as he showed them in a glowing summer evening. It was all his, he took it all in, and communicated rich portions of it to his guests. It was a part of his largess, his hospitality; it was going over his grounds; he was

CAPTAIN JACKSON

lord for the time of showing them, and you the implicit lookers-up to his magnificence.

He was a juggler, who threw mists before your eyes—you had no time to detect his fallacies. He would say, "Hand me the *silver* sugar-tongs"; and before you could discover it was a single spoon, and that *plated*, he would disturb and captivate your imagination by a misnomer of "the urn" for a tea-kettle; or by calling a homely bench a sofa. Rich men direct you to their furniture, poor ones divert you from it; he neither did one nor the other, but by simply assuming that everything was handsome about him, you were positively at a demur what you did, or did not see, at *the cottage*. With nothing to live on, he seemed to live on everything. He had a stock of wealth in his mind; not that which is properly termed *Content*, for in truth he was not to be *contained* at all, but overflowed all bounds by the force of a magnificent self-delusion.

Enthusiasm is catching; and even his wife, a sober native of North Britain, who generally saw things more as they were, was not proof against the continual collision of his credulity. Her daughters were rational and discreet young women; in the main, perhaps, not insensible to their true circumstances. I have seen them assume a thoughtful air at times. But such was the preponderating opulence of his fancy, that I am persuaded not for any half hour together did they ever look their own prospects fairly in the face." There was no resisting the vortex of his temperament. His riotous ima-

CAPTAIN JACKSON

and swagger away the sense of them before strangers, may not be always discommendable. Tibbs, and Bobadil, even when detected, have more of our admiration than contempt. But for a man to put the cheat upon himself; to play the Bobadil at home; and, steeped in poverty up to the lips, to fancy himself all the while chin-deep in riches, is a strain of constitutional philosophy, and a mastery over fortune, which was reserved for my old friend Captain Jackson.

The Superannuated Man

Sera tamen respexit
Libertas. VIRGIL.

A Clerk I was in London gay.—O'KEEFE.

If peradventure, Reader, it has been thy lot to waste the golden years of thy life—thy shining youth—in the irksome confinement of an office; to have thy prison days prolonged through middle age down to decrepitude and silver hairs, without hope of release or respite; to have lived to forget that there are such things as holidays, or to remember them but as the prerogatives of childhood; then, and then only, will you be able to appreciate my deliverance.

It is now six-and-thirty years since I took my seat at the desk in Mincing Lane. Melancholy was the transition at fourteen from the abundant playtime, and the frequently-intervening vacations of school days, to the eight, nine, and sometimes ten hours' a-day attendance at a counting-house. But time partially reconciles us to anything. I gradually became content—doggedly contented, as wild animals in cages.

It is true I had my Sundays to myself; but

Sundays, admirable as the institution of them is for purposes of worship, are for that very reason the very worst adapted for days of unbending and recreation. In particular, there is a gloom for me attendant upon a city Sunday, a weight in the air. I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music, and the ballad-singers—the buzz and stirring murmur of the streets. Those eternal bells depress me. The closed shops repel me. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gewgaws, and ostentatiously displayed wares of tradesmen, which make a week-day saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful—are shut out. No book-stalls deliciously to idle over—no busy faces to recreate the idle man who contemplates them ever passing by—the very face of business a charm by contrast to his temporary relaxation from it. Nothing to be seen but unhappy countenances—or half-happy at best—of emancipated 'prentices and little trades-folks, with here and there a servant-maid that has got leave to go out, who, slaving all the week, with the habit has lost almost the capacity of enjoying a free hour; and lively expressing the hollowness of a day's pleasuring. The very strollers in the fields on that day look anything but comfortable.

But besides Sundays I had a day at Easter, and a day at Christmas, with a full week in the summer to go and air myself in my native fields of Hertfordshire. This last was a great indulgence; and the prospect of its recurrence,

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

I believe, alone kept me up through the year, and made my durance tolerable. But when the week came round, did the glittering phantom of the distance keep touch with me? or rather was it not a series of seven uneasy days, spent in restless pursuit of pleasure, and a wearisome anxiety to find out how to make the most of them? Where was the quiet, where the promised rest? Before I had a taste of it, it was vanished. I was at the desk again, counting upon the fifty-one tedious weeks that must intervene before such another snatch would come. Still the prospect of its coming threw something of an illumination upon the darker side of my captivity. Without it, as I have said, I could scarcely have sustained my thralldom.

Independently of the rigours of attendance, I have ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps a mere caprice) of incapacity for business. This, during my latter years, had increased to such a degree, that it was visible in all the lines of my countenance. My health and my good spirits flagged. I had perpetually a dread of some crisis, to which I should be found unequal. Besides my daylight servitude, I served over again all night in my sleep, and would awake with terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in my accounts, and the like. I was fifty years of age, and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. I had grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.

My fellows in the office would sometimes

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

rally me upon the trouble legible in my countenance; but I did not know that it had raised the suspicions of any of my employers, when, on the 5th of last month, a day ever to be remembered by me, L——, the junior partner in the firm, calling me on one side, directly taxed me with my bad looks, and frankly enquired the cause of them. So taxed, I honestly made confession of my infirmity, and added that I was afraid I should eventually be obliged to resign his service. He spoke some words of course to hearten me, and there the matter rested. A whole week I remained labouring under the impression that I had acted imprudently in my disclosure; that I had foolishly given a handle against myself, and had been anticipating my own dismissal. A week passed in this manner—the most anxious one, I verily believe, in my whole life—when on the evening of the 12th of April, just as I was about quitting my desk to go home (it might be about eight o'clock), I received an awful summons to attend the presence of the whole assembled firm in the formidable back parlour. I thought now my time is surely come, I have done for myself, I am going to be told that they have no longer occasion for me. L——, I could see, smiled at the terror I was in, which was a little relief to me,—when to my utter astonishment B——, the eldest partner, began a formal harangue to me on the length of my services, my very meritorious conduct during the whole of the time (the deuce, thought I, how did he find out that? I protest I never

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

had the confidence to think as much). He went on to descant on the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life (how my heart panted!), and asking me a few questions as to the amount of my own property, of which I have a little, ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent, that I should accept from the house, which I had served so well, a pension for life to the amount of two-thirds of my accustomed salary—a magnificent offer! I do not know what I answered between surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted their proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just ten minutes after eight I went home—for ever. This noble benefit—gratitude forbids me to conceal their names—I owe to the kindness of the most munificent firm in the world—the house of Boldero, Merryweather, Bosanquet, and Lacy.

Esto perpetua!

For the first day or two I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastille, suddenly let loose after a forty years' confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity—for it is a sort of Eternity for a man

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

to have his Time all to himself. It seemed to me that I had more time on my hands than I could ever manage. From a poor man, poor in Time, I was suddenly lifted up into a vast revenue; I could see no end of my possessions; I wanted some steward, or judicious bailiff, to manage my estates in Time for me. And here let me caution persons grown old in active business, not lightly, nor without weighing their own resources, to forego their customary employment all at once, for there may be danger in it. I feel it by myself, but I know that my resources are sufficient; and now that those first giddy raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition. I am in no hurry. Having all holidays, I am as though I had none. If Time hung heavy upon me, I could walk it away; but I do *not* walk all day long, as I used to do in those old transient holidays, thirty miles a day, to make the most of them. If Time were troublesome, I could read it away; but I do *not* read in that violent measure, with which, having no Time my own but candlelight Time, I used to weary out my head and eye-sight in bygone winters. I walk, read, or scribble (as now) just when the fit seizes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure; I let it come to me. I am like the man

—that's born, and has his years come to him,
In some green desert.

“Years!” you will say; “what is this super-

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

annuated simpleton calculating upon? He has already told us he is past fifty."

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people, and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow. For *that* is the only true Time, which a man can properly call his own—that which he has all to himself; the rest, though in some sense he may be said to live it, is other people's time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is at least multiplied for me threefold. My ten next years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preceding thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum.

Among the strange fantasies which beset me at the commencement of my freedom, and of which all traces are not yet gone, one was, that a vast tract of time had intervened since I quitted the Counting House. I could not conceive of it as an affair of yesterday. The partners, and the clerks with whom I had for so many years, and for so many hours in each day of the year, been closely associated—being suddenly removed from them—they seemed as dead to me. There is a fine passage, which may serve to illustrate this fancy, in a Tragedy by Sir Robert Howard, speaking of a friend's death:—

—'Twas but just now he went away;
I have not since had time to shed a tear;
And yet the distance does the same appear
As if he had been a thousand years from me.
Time takes no measure in Eternity.

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

To dissipate this awkward feeling, I have been fain to go among them once or twice since; to visit my old desk-fellows—my co-brethren of the quill—that I had left below in the state militant. Not all the kindness with which they received me could quite restore to me that pleasant familiarity, which I had heretofore enjoyed among them. We cracked some of our old jokes, but methought they went off but faintly. My old desk; the peg where I hung my hat, were appropriated to another. I knew it must be, but I could not take it kindly. D——I take me, if I did not feel some remorse—beast, if I had not—at quitting my old compeers, the faithful partners of my toils for six-and-thirty years, that smoothed for me with their jokes and conundrums the ruggedness of my professional road. Had it been so rugged then, after all? or was I a coward simply? Well, it is too late to repent; and I also know, that these suggestions are a common fallacy of the mind on such occasions. But my heart smote me. I had violently broken the bands betwixt us. It was at least not courteous. I shall be some time before I get quite reconciled to the separation. Farewell, old cronies, yet not for long, for again and again I will come among ye, if I shall have your leave. Farewell, Ch——, dry, sarcastic, and friendly! Do——, mild, slow to move, and gentlemanly! Pl——, officious to do, and to volunteer, good services!—and thou, thou dreary pile, fit mansion for a Gresham or a Whittington of old, stately House of Mer-

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

chants; with thy labyrinthine passages, and light-excluding, pent-up offices, where candles for one half the year supplied the place of the sun's light; unhealthy contributor to my weal, stern fosterer of my living, farewell! In thee remain, and not in the obscure collection of some wandering bookseller, my "works"! There let them rest, as I do from my labours, piled on thy massy shelves, more MSS. in folio than ever Aquinas left, and full as useful! My mantle I bequeath among ye.

A fortnight has passed since the date of my first communication. At that period I was approaching to tranquillity, but had not reached it. I boasted of a calm indeed, but it was comparative only. Something of the first flutter was left; an unsettling sense of novelty; the dazzle to weak eyes of unaccustomed light. I missed my old chains, forsooth, as if they had been some necessary part of my apparel. I was a poor Carthusian, from strict cellular discipline suddenly by some revolution returned upon the world. I am now as if I had never been other than my own master. It is natural to me to go where I please, to do what I please. I find myself at eleven o'clock in the day in Bond-street, and it seems to me that I have been sauntering there at that very hour for years past. I digress into Soho to explore a book-stall. Methinks I have been thirty years a collector. There is nothing strange nor new in it. I find myself before a fine picture in the morning. Was it ever otherwise? What is become of Fish-street Hill? Where is Fen-

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

church-street? Stones of old Mincing Lane, which I have worn with my daily pilgrimage for six-and-thirty years, to the footsteps of what toil-worn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal? I indent the gayer flags of Pall Mall. It is 'Change time, and I am strangely among the Elgin marbles. It was no hyperbole when I ventured to compare the change in my condition to a passing into another world. Time stands still in a manner to me. I have lost all distinction of season. I do not know the day of the week, or of the month. Each day used to be individually felt by me in its reference to the foreign post days; in its distance from, or propinquity to, the next Sunday.

I had my Wednesday feelings, my Saturday nights' sensations. The genius of each day was upon me distinctly during the whole of it, affecting my appetite, spirits, &c. The phantom of the next day, with the dreary five to follow, sate as a load upon my poor Sabbath recreations. What charm has washed that Ethiop white? What is gone of Black Monday? All days are the same. Sunday itself—that unfortunate failure of a holiday, as it too often proved, what with my sense of its fugitiveness, and over-care to get the greatest quantity of service out of it—is melted down into a week-day. I can spare to go to church now, without giving the huge Do-cantle which it used to seem out of the place to a sick friend. I can attend a good service—and thou, I can visit for a Gresham man of much occupation when I can insult over him with

THE SUPERANNUATE

invitation to take a day's pleasure
Windsor this fine May morn-
ing pleasure to behold the
have left behind in the
caring; like horses in

the same eternal round
for? A man can never
himself, nor too little
son, I would christen
should do nothing
is out of his element
I am altogether
Will not—of the lordly, and the gentle-
up those accusing can be more unlike, than the
that lumber of a chapsodies of Shaftesbury and
chit-chat of Temple. The

As low as discernible in both writers;

I am no longer . . . only insinuated gracefully,
of, &c. I am Retired Letter written with his coronet
with in trim gardens. Gentle before him; the
be known by my vacav-chair and undress.—
gesture, perambulating at random than the way in
with any settled purpose. I can peep out in his
to and from. They tell of his delightful
dignitate air, that has been lucent of Nimeguen
my other good parts, has begun authority is quoted
in my person. I grow into George Francisco de
tibly. When I take up a newspaper "England", tells
read the state of the opera. *Opus* entry for men,
I have done all that I came into this world so as they
do. I have worked task-work, and two of life,
rest of the day to myself. fleet, and

THE GENTEEL STYLE

Prince of Orange's. Of grapes he had the honour of bringing over four sorts into England, which he enumerates, and supposes that they are all by this time pretty common among some gardeners in his neighbourhood, as well as several persons of quality; for he ever thought all things of this kind "the commoner they are made the better". The garden pedantry with which he asserts that 'tis to little purpose to plant any of the best fruits, as peaches or grapes, hardly, he doubts, beyond Northamptonshire at the farthest northwards; and praises the "Bishop of Munster at Cosevelt", for attempting nothing beyond cherries in that cold climate; is equally pleasant and in character. "I may perhaps" (he thus ends his sweet Garden Essay with a passage worthy of Cowley) "be allowed to know something of this trade, since I have so long allowed myself to be good for nothing else, which few men will do, or enjoy their gardens, without often looking abroad to see how other matters play, what motions in the state, and what invitations they may hope for into other scenes. For my own part, as the country life, and this part of it more particularly, were the inclination of my youth itself, so they are the pleasures of my age; and I can truly say that, among many great employments that have fallen to my share, I have never asked or sought for any of them, but have often endeavoured to escape from them, into the ease and freedom of a private scene, where a man may go his own way and his own pace, in the common paths and circles

IN WRITING

of life. The measure of choosing well is whether a man likes what he has chosen, which, I thank God, has befallen me; and though among the follies of my life, building and planting have not been the least, and have cost me more than I have the confidence to own; yet they have been fully recompensed by the sweetness and satisfaction of this retreat, where, since my resolution taken of never entering again into any public employments, I have passed five years without ever once going to town, though I am almost in sight of it, and have a house there always ready to receive me. Nor has this been any sort of affectation, as some have thought it, but a mere want of desire or humour to make so small a remove; for when I am in this corner, I can truly say with Horace, *Me quoties reficit,* &c.

“Me, when the cold Digentian stream revives,
What does my friend believe I think or ask?
Let me yet less possess, so I may live,
Whate’er of life remains, unto myself.
May I have books enough; and one year’s
Store,
Not to depend upon each doubtful hour:
This is enough of mighty Jove to pray,
Who, as he pleases, gives and takes away.”

The writings of Temple are, in general, after this easy copy. On one occasion, indeed, his wit, which was mostly subordinate to nature and tenderness, has seduced him into a string of felicitous antitheses; which, it is obvious to remark, have been a model

THE GENTEEL STYLE

to Addison and succeeding essayists. "Who would not be covetous, and with reason," he says, "if health could be purchased with gold? who not ambitious, if it were at the command of power, or restored by honour? but, alas! a white staff will not help gouty feet to walk better than a common cane; nor a blue riband bind up a wound so well as a fillet. The glitter of gold, or of diamonds, will but hurt sore eyes instead of curing them; and an aching head will be no more eased by wearing a crown than a common nightcap." In a far better style, and more accordant with his own humour of plainness, are the concluding sentences of his "Discourse upon Poetry". Temple took a part in the controversy about the ancient and the modern learning; and, with that partiality so natural and so graceful in an old man, whose state engagements had left him little leisure to look into modern productions, while his retirement gave him occasion to look back upon the classic studies of his youth—decided in favour of the latter. "Certain it is," he says, "that, whether the fierceness of the Gothic humours, or noise of their perpetual wars, frightened it away, or that the unequal mixture of the modern languages would not bear it—the great heights and excellency both of poetry and music fell with the Roman learning and empire, and have never since recovered the admiration and applauses that before attended them. Yet, such as they are amongst us, they must be confessed to be the softest and the sweetest, the most general and most innocent amusements of

IN WRITING

common time and life. They still find room in the courts of princes and the cottages of shepherds. They serve to revive and animate the dead calm of poor and idle lives, and to allay or divert the violent passions and perturbations of the greatest and the busiest men. And both these effects are of equal use to human life; for the mind of man is like the sea, which is neither agreeable to the beholder nor the voyager, in a calm or in a storm, but is so to both when a little agitated by gentle gales; and so the mind, when moved by soft and easy passions or affections. I know very well that many who pretend to be wise by the forms of being grave, are apt to despise both poetry and music, as toys and trifles too light for the use or entertainment of serious men. But whoever find themselves wholly insensible to their charms, would, I think, do well to keep their own counsel, for fear of reproaching their own temper, and bringing the goodness of their natures, if not of their understandings, into question. While this world lasts, I doubt not but the pleasure and request of these two entertainments will do so too; and happy those that content themselves with these, or any other so easy and so innocent, and do not trouble the world or other men, because they cannot be quiet themselves, though nobody hurts them." "When all is done" (he concludes), "human life is at the greatest and the best but like a froward child, that must be played with, and humoured a little, to keep it quiet, till it falls asleep, and then the care is over."

Barbara S——

On the noon of the 14th of November, 1743 or 4, I forget which it was, just as the clock had struck one, Barbara S——, with her accustomed punctuality, ascended the long rambling staircase, with awkward interposed landing-places, which led to the office, or rather a sort of box with a desk in it, whereat sat the then treasurer of (what few of our readers may remember) the old Bath Theatre. All over the island it was the custom, and remains so I believe to this day, for the players to receive their weekly stipend on the Saturday. It was not much that Barbara had to claim.

This little maid had just entered her eleventh year; but her important station at the theatre, as it seemed to her, with the benefits which she felt to accrue from her pious application of her small earnings, had given an air of womanhood to her steps and to her behaviour. You would have taken her to have been at least five years older.

Till latterly she had merely been employed in choruses, or where children were wanted to fill up the scene. But the manager, observing a diligence and adroitness in her above her

I have little or none to tell—so I will just mention an observation of hers connected with that interesting time.

Not long before she died I had been discoursing with her on the quantity of real present emotion which a great tragic performer experiences during acting. I ventured to think, that though in the first instance such players must have possessed the feelings which they so powerfully called up in others, yet by frequent repetition those feelings must become deadened in great measure, and the performer trust to the memory of past emotion, rather than express a present one. She indignantly repelled the notion, that with a truly great tragedian the operation, by which such effects were produced upon an audience, could ever degrade itself into what was purely mechanical. With much delicacy, avoiding to instance in her *self*-experience, she told me, that so long ago as when she used to play the part of the Little Son to Mrs. Porter's *Isabella* (I think it was), when that impressive actress has been bending over her in some heart-rending colloquy, she has felt real hot tears come trickling from her, which (to use her powerful expression) have perfectly scalded her back.

I am not quite so sure that it was Mrs. Porter; but it was some great actress of that day. The name is indifferent; but the fact of the scalding tears I most distinctly remember.

I was always fond of the society of players, and am not sure that an impediment in my speech (which certainly kept me out of the

pulpit), even more than certain personal disqualifications, which are often got over in that profession, did not prevent me at one time of life from adopting it. I have had the honour (I must ever call it) once to have been admitted to the tea-table of Miss Kelly. I have played at serious whist with Mr. Liston. I have chatted with ever good-humoured Mrs. Charles Kemble. I have conversed as friend to friend with her accomplished husband. I have been indulged with a classical conference with Macready; and with a sight of the Player-picture gallery, at Mr. Matthews's, when the kind owner, to remunerate me for my love of the old actors (whom he loves so much), went over it with me, supplying to his capital collection what alone the artist could not give them—voice, and their living motion. Old tones, half-faded, of Dodd, and Parsons, and Baddeley, have lived again for me at his bidding. Only Edwin he could not restore to me. I have supped with —; but I am growing a coxcomb.

As I was about to say—at the desk of the then treasurer of the old Bath Theatre—not Diamond's—presented herself the little Barbara S—.

The parents of Barbara had been in reputable circumstances. The father had practised, I believe, as an apothecary in the town. But his practice, from causes which I feel my own infirmity too sensibly that way to arraign—or perhaps from that pure infelicity which accompanies some people in their walk through life,

and which it is impossible to lay at the door of imprudence—was now reduced to nothing. They were, in fact, in the very teeth of starvation, when the manager, who knew and respected them in better days, took the little Barbara into his company.

At the period I commenced with, her slender earnings were the sole support of the family, including two younger sisters. I must throw a veil over some mortifying circumstances. Enough to say, that her Saturday's pittance was the only chance of a Sunday's (generally their only) meal of meat.

One thing I will only mention, that in some child's part, where in her theatrical character she was to sup off a roast fowl (O joy to Barbara!) some comic actor, who was for the night caterer for this dainty—in the misguided humour of his part, threw over the dish such a quantity of salt (O grief and pain of heart to Barbara!) that when she crammed a portion of it into her mouth, she was obliged sputteringly to reject it; and what with shame of her ill-acted part, and pain of real appetite at missing such a dainty, her little heart sobbed almost to breaking, till a flood of tears, which the well-fed spectators were totally unable to comprehend, mercifully relieved her.

This was the little starved, meritorious maid, who stood before old Ravenscroft, the treasurer, for her Saturday's payment.

Ravenscroft was a man, I have heard many old theatrical people besides herself say, of all men least calculated for a treasurer. He had

no head for accounts, paid away at random, kept scarce any books, and summing up at the week's end, if he found himself a pound or so deficient, blest himself that it was no worse.

Now Barbara's weekly stipend was a bare half-guinea.—By mistake he popped into her hand—a whole one.

Barbara tripped away.

She was entirely unconscious at first of the mistake: God knows, Ravenscroft would never have discovered it.

But when she had got down to the first of those uncouth landing-places, she became sensible of an unusual weight of metal pressing her little hand.

Now mark the dilemma.

She was by nature a good child. From her parents and those about her she had imbibed no contrary influence. But then they had taught her nothing. Poor men's smoky cabins are not always porticoes of moral philosophy. This little maid had no instinct to evil, but then she might be said to have no fixed principle. She had heard honesty commended, but never dreamed of its application to herself. She thought of it as something which concerned grown-up people, men and women. She had never known temptation, or thought of preparing resistance against it.

Her first impulse was to go back to the old treasurer, and explain to him his blunder. He was already so confused with age, besides a natural want of punctuality, that she would have had some difficulty in making him under-

stand it. She saw *that* in an instant. And then it was such a bit of money! and then the image of a larger allowance of butcher's meat on their table next day came across her till her little eyes glistened, and her mouth moistened. But then Mr. Ravenscroft had always been so good-natured, had stood her friend behind the scenes, and even recommended her promotion to some of her little parts. But again the old man was reputed to be worth a world of money. He was supposed to have fifty pounds a-year clear of the theatre. And then came staring upon her the figures of her little stockingless and shoeless sisters. And when she looked at her own neat white cotton stockings, which her situation at the theatre had made it indispensable for her mother to provide for her, with hard straining and pinching from the family stock, and thought how glad she should be to cover their poor feet with the same—and how then they could accompany her to rehearsals, which they had hitherto been precluded from doing, by reason of their unfashionable attire,—in these thoughts she reached the second landing-place—the second, I mean, from the top—for there was still another left to traverse.

Now virtue support Barbara!

And that never-failing friend did step in—for at ~~that~~ moment a strength not her own, I have heard her say, was revealed to her—a reason above reasoning—and without her own agency, as it seemed (for she never felt her feet to move), she found herself transported back to

the individual desk she had just quitted, and her hand in the old hand of Ravenscroft, who in silence took back the refunded treasure, and who had been sitting (good man) insensible to the lapse of minutes, which to her were anxious ages, and from that moment a deep peace fell upon her heart, and she knew the quality of honesty.

A year or two's unrepining application to her profession brightened up the feet and the prospects of her little sisters, set the whole family upon their legs again, and released her from the difficulty of discussing moral dogmas upon a landing-place.

I have heard her say that it was a surprise, not much short of mortification to her, to see the coolness with which the old man pocketed the difference, which had caused her such mortal throes.

This anecdote of herself I had in the year 1800, from the mouth of the late Mrs. Crawford, then sixty-seven years of age (she died soon after); and to her struggles upon this childish occasion I have sometimes ventured to think her indebted for that power of rending the heart in the representation of conflicting emotions, for which in after years she was considered as little inferior (if at all so in the part of Lady Randolph) even to Mrs. Siddons.

The Tombs in the Abbey

In a Letter to R— S—, Esq.

Though in some points of doctrine, and perhaps of discipline, I am dissident of lending a perfect assent to that church which you have so worthily *hallowed*, yet may the ill time never come to me, when with a chilled heart, or a portion of irreverent sentiment, I shall enter her beautiful and time-hallowed edifices. Judge, then, of my mortification when, after attending the choral anthems of last Wednesday at Westminster, and being desirous of renewing my acquaintance, after lapsed years, with the tombs and antiquities there, I found myself excluded; turned out like a dog, or some profane person, into the common street, with feelings not very congenial to the place, or to the solemn service which I had been listening to. It was a jar after that music.

You had your education at Westminster; and doubtless among those dim aisles and cloister, you must have gathered much of that devotional feeling in those young years, on which your purest mind feeds still—and may it feed! The antiquarian spirit, strong in you, and gracefully blending ever with the religious,

THE TOMBS IN THE ABBEY

value these insignificant pieces of money, these minims to their sight, may be to their humbler brethren. Shame these Sellers out of the Temple. Stifle not the suggestions of your better nature with the pretext, that an indiscriminate admission would expose the Tombs to violation. Remember your boy-days. Did you ever see, or hear, of a mob in the Abbey while it was free to all? Do the rabble come there, or trouble their heads about such speculations? It is all that you can do to drive them into your churches; they do not voluntarily offer themselves. They have, alas! no passion for antiquities; for tomb of king or prelate, sage or poet. If they had, they would be no longer the rabble.

For forty years that I have known the Fabric, the only well-attested charge of violation ad-
 vanced has been—a ridiculous dismemberment committed upon the effigy of that amiable spy, Colonel André. And is it for this—the wanton Mischief of some school-boy, fired perhaps with misanthropic Transatlantic Freedom—or the rawness of such a mischief occurring to myself easily to be prevented by stationing you, sir, within the walls, if the vergers are sufficient to the duty—is it upon such fulchred pretences that the people of England be made to pay a new Peter's Pence, so long abrogated; or must content themselves with contemplating the ragged Exterior of their Cathedral? The mischief was done about the time that you were a scholar there. Do you know anything about the unfortunate relic?—

Amicus Redivivus

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?

I do not know when I have experienced a stranger sensation than on seeing my old friend G. D., who had been paying me a morning visit, a few Sundays back, at my cottage at Islington, upon taking leave, instead of turning down the right-hand path by which he had entered—with staff in hand, and at noonday, deliberately march right forwards into the midst of the stream that runs by us, and totally disappear.

A spectacle like this at dusk would have been appalling enough; but in the broad, open daylight, to witness such an unreserved motion towards self-destruction in a valued friend, took from me all power of speculation.

How I found my feet I know not. Consciousness was quite gone. Some spirit, not my own, whirled me to the spot. I remember nothing but the silvery apparition of a good white head emerging; nigh which a staff (the hand unseen that wielded it) pointed upwards, as feeling for the skies. In a moment (if time

AMICUS REDIVIVUS

was in that time) he was on my shoulders, and I—freighted with a load more precious than his who bore Anchises.

And here I cannot but do justice to the officious zeal of sundry passers-by, who, albeit arriving a little too late to participate in the honours of the rescue, in philanthropic shoals came thronging to communicate their advice as to the recovery; prescribing variously the application, or non-application, of salt, &c., to the person of the patient. Life meantime was ebbing fast away, amidst the stifle of conflicting judgments, when one, more sagacious than the rest, by a bright thought proposed sending for the Doctor. Trite as the counsel was, and impossible, as one should think, to be missed on,—shall I confess?—in this emergency it was to me as if an Angel had spoken. Great previous exertions—and mine had not been inconsiderable—are commonly followed by a debility of purpose. This was a moment of irresolution.

MONOCULUS—for so, in default of catching his true name, I choose to designate the medical gentleman who now appeared—is a grave, middle-aged person, who, without having studied at the college, or truckled to the pedantry of a diploma, hath employed a great portion of his valuable time ~~in~~ experimental processes upon the bodies of ~~the~~ unfortunate fellow-creatures, in whom the vital spark, to mere vulgar thinking, would seem extinct and lost for ever. He omitteth no occasion of obtruding his services, from a case of common

AMICUS REDIVIVUS

surfeit-suffocation to the ignobler obstructions, sometimes induced by a too wilful application of the plant *cannabis* outwardly. But though he declineth not altogether these drier extinctions, his occupation tendeth for the most part to water-practice; for the convenience of which, he hath judiciously fixed his quarters near the grand repository of the stream mentioned, where, day and night, from his little watch-tower, at the Middleton's Head, he listeneth to detect the wrecks of drowned mortality—partly, as he saith, to be upon the spot—and partly, because the liquids which he useth to prescribe to himself and his patients, on these distressing occasions, are ordinarily more conveniently to be found at these common hostelryes, than in the shops and phials of the apothecaries. His ear hath arrived to such finesse by practice, that it is reported he can distinguish a plunge at a half furlong distance; and can tell if it be casual or deliberate. He weareth a medal, suspended over a suit, originally of a sad brown, but which, by time and frequency of nightly divings, has been dinged into a true professional sable. He passeth by the name of Doctor, and is remarkable for wanting his left eye. His remedy—after a sufficient application of warm blankets, friction, &c., is a simple tumbler, or more, of the purest Cognac, with water, made as hot, ^{as} the convalescent can bear it. Where he findeth, as in the case of my friend, a squeamish subject, he condescendeth to be the taster; and sheweth, by his own example, the innocuous nature of the prescription. Nothing

AMICUS REDIVIVUS

can be more kind or encouraging than this procedure. It addeth confidence to the patient, to see his medical adviser go hand in hand with himself in the remedy. When the doctor swalloweth his own draught, what peevish invalid can refuse to pledge him in the potion? In fine, MONOCULUS is a humane, sensible man, who, for a slender pittance, scarce enough to sustain life, is content to wear it out in the endeavour to save the lives of others—his pretensions so moderate, that with difficulty I could press a crown upon him, for the price of restoring the existence of such an invaluable creature to society as G. D.

It was pleasant to observe the effect of the subsiding alarm upon the nerves of the dear absentee. It seemed to have given a shake to memory, calling up notice after notice of all the providential deliverances he had experienced in the course of his long and innocent life. Sitting up in my couch—my couch which, naked and void of furniture hitherto, for the salutary repose which it administered, shall be honoured with costly valance, at some price, and henceforth be a state-bed at Colbrook,—he discoursed of marvellous escapes—by carelessness of nurses—by pails of gelid, and kettles of the boiling element, in infancy—by orchard-pranks, and snapping twigs, in school-boy frolics—by descent of tiles at Tripington, and of heavier tomes at Pembroke—by studious watchings, inducing frightful vigilance—by want, and the fear of want, and all the sore throbbings of the learned head.—Anon,

AMICUS REDIVIVUS

he would burst out into little fragments of chanting—of songs long ago—ends of deliverance-hymns, not remembered before since childhood, but coming up now, when his heart was made tender as a child's—for the *tremor cordis*, in the retrospect of a recent deliverance, as in a case of impending danger, acting upon an innocent heart, will produce a self-tenderness, which we should do ill to christen cowardice; and Shakspeare, in the latter crisis, has made his good Sir Hugh to remember the sitting by Babylon, and to mutter of shallow rivers.

Waters of Sir Hugh Middleton—what a spark you were like to have extinguished for ever! Your salubrious streams to this City, for now near two centuries, would hardly have atoned for what you were in a moment washing away. Mockery of a river—liquid artifice—wretched conduit! henceforth rank with canals and sluggish aqueducts. Was it for this that, smit in boyhood with the explorations of that Abyssinian traveller, I paced the vales of Amwell to explore your tributary springs, to trace your salutary waters sparkling through green Hertfordshire, and cultured Enfield parks?—Ye have no swans—no Naiads—no river God—or did the benevolent hoary aspect of my friend tempt ye to suck him in, that ye also might have the tutelary genius of your waters?

Had he been drowned in Cam, there would have been some consonancy in it; but what willows had ye to wave and rustle over his moist sepulture?—or, having no *name*, besides

AMICUS REDIVIVUS

that unmeaning assumption of *eternal novelty*, did ye think to get one by the noble prize, and henceforth to be termed the STREAM DYERIAN?

And could such spacious virtue find a grave
Beneath the imposthumed bubble of a wave?

I protest, George, you shall not venture out again—no, not by daylight—without a sufficient pair of spectacles—in your musing moods especially. Your absence of mind we have borne, till your presence of body came to be called in question by it. You shall not go wandering into Euripus with Aristotle, if we can help it. Fie, man, to turn dipper at your years, after your many tracts in favour of sprinkling only!

I have nothing but water in my head o' nights since this frightful accident. Sometimes I am with Clarence in his dream. At others, I behold Christian beginning to sink, and crying out to his good brother Hopeful (that is, to me), "I sink in deep waters; the billows go over my head, all the waves go over me. Selah." Then I have before me Palinurus, just letting go the steerage. I cry out too late to save. Next follow—a mournful procession—*suicidal faces*, saved against their wills from drowning; dolefully trailing a length of reluctant gratefulness, with ropy weeds pendent from locks of watchet hue—constrained Lazari—Pluto's half-subjects—stolen fees from the grave—bilking Charon of his fare. At their

AMICUS REDIVIVUS

head Arion—or is it G. D.?—in his singing garments marcheth singly, with harp in hand, and votive garland, which Machaon (or Dr. Hawes) snatcheth straight, intending to suspend it to the stern God of Sea. Then follow dismal streams of Lethe, in which the half-drenched on earth are constrained to drown downright, by wharfs where Ophelia twice acts her muddy death.

And, doubtless, there is some notice in that invisible world when one of us approacheth (as my friend did so lately) to their inexorable precincts. When a soul knocks once, twice, at Death's door, the sensation aroused within the palace must be considerable; and the grim Feature, by modern science so often dispossessed of his prey, must have learned by this time to pity Tantalus.

A pulse assuredly was felt along the line of the Elysian shades, when the near arrival of G. D. was announced by no equivocal indications. From their seats of Asphodel arose the gentler and the graver ghosts—poet, or historian—of Grecian or of Roman lore—to crown with unfading chaplets the half-finished love-labours of their unwearied scholiast. Him Markland expected—him Tyrwhitt hoped to encounter—him the sweet lyrist of Peter House, whom he had barely seen upon earth, with newest airs prepared to greet —; and patron of the gentle Christ's boy,—who should have been his patron through life—the mild Askew, with longing aspirations leaned foremost from his venerable Æsculapian chair, to

AMICUS REDIVIVUS

welcome into that happy company the matured virtues of the man, whose tender scions in the boy he himself upon earth had so prophetically fed and watered.

Some Sonnets of Sir Philip Sydney

Sydney's Sonnets—I speak of the best of them—are among the very best of their sort. They fall below the plain moral dignity, the sanctity, and high yet modest spirit of self-approval, of Milton, in his compositions of a similar structure. They are in truth what Milton, censuring the *Arcadia*, says of that work (to which they are a sort of after-tune or application), “vain and amatorious” enough, yet the things in their kind (as he confesses to be true of the romance) may be “full of worth and wit”. They savour of the Courtier, it must be allowed, and not of the Commonwealthsman. But Milton was a Courtier when he wrote the Masque at Ludlow Castle, and still more a Courtier when he composed the *Arcades*. When the national struggle was to begin, he ~~gladly~~ ^{looming} cast these vanities behind him, and if the order of time had thrown Sir Philip upon the crisis which preceded the Revolution, there is no reason why he should not have acted the same part in that emergency, which has glorified the name of a

SOME SONNETS OF

To me, that feel the like, thy state describes.
 Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
 Is constant love deem'd there but want of wit?
 Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
 Do they above love to be loved, and yet
 Those lovers scorn, whom that love doth possess?
 Do they call *virtue* there—*ungratefulness*!

The last line of this poem is a little obscured by transposition. He means, Do they call *ungratefulness* there a *virtue*?

II

Come, Sleep, O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,
 The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
 The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
 The indifferent judge between the high and low;
 With shield of proof shield me from out the prey
 Of those fierce darts despair at me doth throw;
 O make in me those civil wars to cease:
 I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
 Take thou of me sweet pillows, sweetest bed;
 A chamber deaf to noise, and blind to light;
 A rosy garland, and a weary head.
 And if these things, as being thine by right,
 Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
 Livelier than elsewhere, STELLA'S image see.

III

The curious wits, seeing dull pensiveness
 Bewray itself in my long-settled eyes,
 Whence those same fumes of melancholy rise,
 With idle pains, and missing aim, do guess.
 Some, that know how my spring I did address,
 Deem that my Muse some fruit of knowledge plies
 Others, because the Prince my service tries,
 Think, that I think state errors to redress;
 But harder judges judge, ambition's rage,

SIR PHILIP SYDNEY

Scourge of itself, still climbing slippery place,
Holds my young brain captiv'd in golden cage.
O fools, or over-wise! alas, the race
Of all my thoughts hath neither stop nor start,
But only STELLA'S eyes, and STELLA'S heart.

IV

Because I oft in dark abstracted guise
Seem most alone in greatest company,
With dearth of words, or answers quite awry,
To them that would make speech of speech arise;
They deem, and of their doom the rumour flies,
That poison foul of bubbling *Pride* doth lie
So in my swelling breast, that only I
Fawn on myself, and others do despise;
Yet *Pride*, I think, doth not my soul possess,
Which looks too oft in his unflattering glass;
But one worse fault—*Ambition*—I confess,
That makes me oft my best friends overpass,
Unseen, unheard—while Thought to highest place
Bends all his powers, even unto STELLA'S grace.

V

Having this day, my horse, my hand, my lance,
Guided so well that I obtained the prize,
Both by the judgment of the English eyes,
And of some sent from that *sweet enemy*,—France:
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance;
Townfolk my strength; a daintier judge applies
His praise to sleight, which from good use doth
rise;
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;
Others, because of both sides I do take
My blood from them, who did excel in this,
Think Nature me a man of arms did make.
How far they shot awry! the true cause is,
STELLA looked on, and from her heavenly face
Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race.

SOME SONNETS OF

Nor that he could, young-wise, wise-valiant, frame
His sire's revenge, join'd with a kingdom's gain;
And, gain'd by Mars could yet mad Mars so tame,
That Balance weigh'd what Sword did late obtain.
Nor that he made the Floure-de-luce so 'fraid,
Though strongly hedged of bloody Lions' paws,
That witty Lewis to him a tribute paid.
Nor this, nor that, nor any such small cause—
But only, for this worthy knight durst prove
To lose his crown rather than fail his love.

XI

O happy Thames, that didst my STELLA bear,
I saw thyself, with many a smiling line
Upon thy cheerful face, Joy's livery wear,
While those fair planets on thy streams did shine;
The boat for joy could not to dance forbear,
While wanton winds, with beauty so divine
Ravish'd, stay'd not, till in her golden hair
They did themselves (O sweetest prison) twine.
And fain those Æol's youth there would their stay
Have made; but, forced by nature still to fly,
First did with puffing kiss those locks display.
She, so dishevell'd, blush'd; from window I
With sight thereof cried out, O fair disgrace,
Let Honour's self to thee grant highest place!

XII

Highway, since you my chief Parnassus be;
And that my Muse, to some ears not unsweet,
Tempers her words to trampling horses' feet,
More soft than to a chamber melody;
Now blessed You bear onward blessed Me
To Her, where I my heart safe left shall meet,
My Muse and I must you of duty greet
With thanks and wishes, wishing thankfully.
Be you still fair, honour'd by public heed,
By no encroachment wrong'd, nor time forgot;

SIR PHILIP SYDNEY

Nor blamed for blood, nor shamed for sinful deed.
And that you know, I envy you no lot
Of highest wish, I wish you so much bliss,
Hundreds of years you STELLA's feet may kiss.

Of the foregoing, the first, the second, and the last sonnet, are my favourites. But the general beauty of them all is, that they are so perfectly characteristical. The spirit of "learning and of chivalry",—of which union Spenser has entitled Sydney to have been the "president",—shines through them. I confess I can see nothing of the "jejune" or "frigid" in them; much less of the "stiff" and "cumbrous"—which I have sometimes heard objected to the *Arcadia*. The verse runs off swiftly and gallantly. It might have been tuned to the trumpet; or tempered (as himself expresses it) to "trampling horses' feet". They abound in felicitous phrases—

O heav'nly Fool, thy most kiss-worthy face—

8th Sonnet.

——Sweet pillows, sweetest bed;

A chamber deaf to noise, and blind to light;

A rosy garland, and a weary head.

2nd Sonnet.

——That sweet enemy,—France—

5th Sonnet.

But they are not rich in words only, in vague and unlocalized feelings—the failing too much of some poetry of the present day—they are full, material, and circumstantiated. Time and place appropriates every one of them. It is not

SOME SONNETS OF

a fever of passion wasting itself upon a thin diet of dainty words, but a transcendent passion pervading and illuminating action, pursuits, studies, feats of arms, the opinions of contemporaries, and his judgment of them. An historical thread runs through them, which almost affixes a date to them; marks the *when* and *where* they were written.

I have dwelt the longer upon what I conceive the merit of these poems, because I have been hurt by the wantonness (I wish I could treat it by a gentler name) with which W. H. takes every occasion of insulting the memory of Sir Philip Sydney. But the decisions of the Author of Table Talk, &c. (most profound and subtle where they are, as for the most part, just), are more safely to be relied upon on subjects and authors he has a partiality for, than on such as he has conceived an accidental prejudice against. Milton wrote Sonnets, and was a king-hater; and it was congenial perhaps to sacrifice a courtier to a patriot. But I was unwilling to lose a *fine idea* from my mind. The noble images, passions, sentiments, and poetical delicacies of character, scattered all over the *Arcadia* (spite of some stiffness and encumberment), justify to me the character which his contemporaries have left us of the writer. I cannot think with the *Critic*, that Sir Philip Sydney was that *opprobrious thing* which a foolish nobleman in his insolent hostility chose to term him. I call to mind the epitaph made on him, to guide me to juster thoughts of him; and I repose upon the beautiful lines in the *Friend's*

SIR PHILIP SYDNEY

Parish for his Astrophel, printed with the Elegies
of Spenser and others :

You know—who know not Astrophel
(That I should live to say I knew,
And have not in possession still!)—
Things known permit me to renew—
Of him you know his merit such,
I cannot say—you hear—too much.

Within these woods of Arcady
He chief delight and pleasure took;
And on the mountain Partheny,
Upon the crystal liquid brook,
The Muses met him every day,
That taught him ring, to write, and say.

When he descended down the mount,
His personage seemed most divine:
A thousand graces one might count
Upon his lovely cheerful cyme.
To hear him speak, and sweetly smile,
You were in Paradise the while.

*A sweet attractive kind of grace;
A full assurance given by looks;
Continual comfort in a face,
The lineaments of Gospel books—*
I trow that count'nance cannot lye,
Whose thoughts are legible in the eye.

• • • • •

Above ^{rejoice} all others this is he,
Which erst approvèd in his song,
That love and honour might agree,
And that pure love will do no wrong.
Sweet saints, it is no sin or blame
To love a man of virtuous name.

SYDNEY'S SONNETS

Did never love so sweetly breathe
In any mortal breast before;
Did never muse inspire beneath
A Poet's brain with finer store!
He wrote of Love with high conceit,
And Beauty rear'd above her height.

Or let anyone read the deeper sorrows (grief running into rage) in the Poem,—the last in the collection accompanying the above,—which from internal testimony I believe to be Lord Brooke's,—beginning with “Silence augmented grief”,—and then seriously ask himself, whether the subject of such absorbing and confounding regrets could have been *that thing* which Lord Oxford termed him.

Newspapers Thirty-five Years Ago

Dan Stuart once told us that he did not remember that he ever deliberately walked into the Exhibition at Somerset House in his life. He might occasionally have escorted a party of ladies across the way that were going in; but he never went in of his own head. Yet the office of the *Morning Post* newspaper stood then just where it does now—we are carrying you back, Reader, some thirty years or more—with its gilt-globe-topt front facing that emporium of our artists' grand Annual Exposure. We sometimes wish that we had observed the same abstinence with Daniel.

A word or two of D. S. He ever appeared to us one of the finest-tempered of Editors. • Perry, of the *Morning Chronicle*, was equally pleasant, with a dash, no slight one either, of the courtier. S. was frank, plain, and English all over. We have worked for both these gentlemen.

It is soothing to contemplate the head of the Ganges; to trace the first little bubblings of a mighty river,

With holy reverence to approach the rocks,
Whence glide the streams renowned in ancient song.

NEWSPAPERS

Fired with a perusal of the Abyssinian Pilgrim's exploratory ramblings after the cradle of the infant Nilus, we well remember on one fine summer holiday (a "whole day's leave" we called it at Christ's Hospital) sallying forth at rise of sun, not very well provisioned either for such an undertaking, to trace the current of the New River—Middletonian stream!—to its scaturient source, as we had read, in meadows by fair Amwell. Gallantly did we commence our solitary quest—for it was essential to the dignity of a DISCOVERY, that no eye of school-boy, save our own, should beam on the detection. By flowery spots and verdant lanes, skirting Hornsey, Hope trained us on in many a baffling turn; endless, hopeless meanders, as it seemed; or as if the jealous waters had *dodged* us, reluctant to have the humble spot of their nativity revealed; till spent, and nigh famished, before set of the same sun, we sate down somewhere by Bowes Farm near Tottenham, with a tithe of our proposed labours only yet accomplished; sorely convinced in spirit that that Brucian enterprise was as yet too arduous for our young shoulders.

Not more refreshing to the thirsty curiosity of the traveller is the tracing of some mighty waters up to their shallow fontlet, than it is to a pleased and candid reader to go back to the inexperienced essays, the first callow flights in authorship, of some established name in literature; from the Gnat which preluded to the *Æneid*, to the Duck which Samuel Johnson trod on.

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

In those days every Morning Paper, as an essential retainer to its establishment, kept an author, who was bound to furnish daily a quantum of witty paragraphs. Sixpence a joke—and it was thought pretty high too—was Dan Stuart's settled remuneration in these cases. The chat of the day—scandal, but, above all, *dress*—furnished the material. The length of no paragraph was to exceed seven lines. Shorter they might be, but they must be poignant.

A fashion of *flesh*, or rather *pink*-coloured hose for the ladies, luckily coming up at the juncture when we were on our probation for the place of Chief Jester to S.'s paper, established our reputation in that line. We were pronounced a "capital hand". O the conceits which we varied upon *red* in all its prismatic differences! from the trite and obvious flower of Cytherea to the flaming costume of the lady that has her sitting upon "many waters". Then there was the collateral topic of ankles. What an occasion to a truly chaste writer, like ourself, of touching that nice brink, and yet never tumbling over it, of a seemingly ever approximating something "not quite proper"; while, like a skilful posture-master balancing betwixt decorums and their opposites, he keeps the line, from which a hair-breadth's deviation is destruction; hovering in the confines of light and darkness, or where "both seem either"; a hazy uncertain delicacy; Autolycus-like in the Play, still putting off his expectant auditory with "Whoop; do me no harm, good

NEWSPAPERS

man!" But, above all, that conceit arrided us most at that time, and still tickles our midriff to remember, where, allusively to the flight of *Astræa—ultima Cælestium terras reliquit*—we pronounced—in reference to the stockings still—that MODESTY, TAKING HER FINAL LEAVE OF MORTALS, HER LAST BLUSH WAS VISIBLE IN HER ASCENT TO THE HEAVENS BY THE TRACT OF THE GLOWING INSTEP. This might be called the crowning conceit; and was esteemed tolerable writing in those days.

But the fashion of jokes, with all other things, passes away; as did the transient mode which had so favoured us. The ankles of our fair friends in a few weeks began to reassume their whiteness, and left us scarce a leg to stand upon. Other female whims followed, but none, methought, so pregnant, so invitatory of shrewd conceits, and more than single meanings.

Somebody has said, that to swallow six cross-buns daily, consecutively for a fortnight, would surfeit the stoutest digestion. But to have to furnish as many jokes daily, and that not for a fortnight, but for a long twelvemonth, as we were constrained to do, was a little harder exaction. "Man goeth forth to his work until the evening"—from a reasonable hour in the morning, we presume ~~it~~ was meant. Now, as our main occupation took us up from eight till five every day in the City, and as our evening hours, at that time of life, had generally to do with anything rather than business, it follows that the only time we could spare for

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

this manufactory of jokes—our supplementary livelihood that supplied us in every want beyond mere bread and cheese—was exactly that part of the day which (as we have heard of No Man's Land) may be fitly denominated No Man's Time; that is, no time in which a man ought to be up and awake in. To speak more plainly, it is that time, of an hour, or an hour and a half's duration, in which a man, whose occasions call him up so preposterously, has to wait for his breakfast.

O those headaches at dawn of day, when at five, or half-past five in summer, and not much later in the dark seasons, we were compelled to rise, having been perhaps not above four hours in bed—(for we were no go-to-beds with the lamb, though we anticipated the lark oft-times in her rising—we like a parting cup at midnight, as all young men did before these effeminate times, and to have our friends about us—we were not constellated under Aquarius, that watery sign, and therefore incapable of Bacchus, cold, washy, bloodless—we were none of your Basilian water-sponges, nor had taken our degrees at Mount Ague—we were right topping Capulets, jolly companions, we and they)—but to have to get up, as we said before, curtailed of half our fair sleep, fasting, with only a dim vista of refreshing bohea in the distance—to be necessitated to rouse ourselves at the detestable rap of an old hag of a domestic, who seemed to take a diabolical pleasure in her announcement that it was “time to rise”; and whose chappy knuckles we have often yearned to amputate,

it lay at the time; nor was it easy to be detected, when the thing came out advantaged by type and letterpress. He had better have met anything that morning than a Common Council Man. His services were shortly after dispensed with, on the plea that his paragraphs of late had been deficient in point. The one in question, it must be owned, had an air, in the opening especially, proper to awaken curiosity; and the sentiment, or moral, wears the aspect of humanity and good neighbourly feeling. But somehow the conclusion was not judged altogether to answer to the magnificent promise of the premises. We traced our friend's pen afterwards in the *True Briton*, the *Star*, the *Traveller*,—from all which he was successively dismissed, the Proprietors having “no further occasion for his services”. Nothing was easier than to detect him. When wit failed, or topics ran low, there constantly appeared the following—“*It is not generally known that the three Blue Balls at the Pawnbrokers' shops are the ancient arms of Lombardy. The Lombards were the first money-brokers in Europe.*” Bob has done more to set the public right on this important point of blazonry, than the whole College of Heralds.

The appointment of a regular wit has long ceased to be a part of the economy of a Morning Paper. Editors find their own jokes, or do as well without them. Parson Este and Topham brought up the set custom of “witty paragraphs” first in the *World*. Boaden was a reigning paragraphist in his day, and succeeded poor Allen in the *Oracle*. But, as we said, the

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

fashion of jokes passes away; and it would be difficult to discover in the biographer of Mrs. Siddons any traces of that vivacity and fancy which charmed the whole town at the commencement of the present century. Even the prelusive delicacies of the present writer—the curt “Astræan allusion”—would be thought pedantic and out of date in these days.

From the office of the *Morning Post* (for we may as well exhaust our Newspaper Reminiscences at once), by change of property in the paper, we were transferred, mortifying exchange! to the office of the *Albion* Newspaper, late Rackstraw's Museum, in Fleet-street. What a transition—from a handsome apartment, from rosewood desks and silver inkstands, to an office—no office, but a *den* rather, but just redeemed from the occupation of dead monsters, of which it seemed redolent—from the centre of loyalty and fashion to a focus of vulgarity and sedition! Here in murky closet, inadequate from its square contents to the receipt of the two bodies of Editor and humble paragraph-maker, together at one time, sat in the discharge of his new editorial functions (the “Bigod” of Elia) the redoubted John Fenwick.

F., without a guinea in his pocket, and having left not many in the pockets of his friends whom he might command, had purchased (on tick, doubtless) the whole and sole Editorship, Proprietorship, with all the rights and titles (such as they were worth) of the *Albion* from one Lovell; of whom we know nothing, save that he had stood in the pillory

Barrenness of the Imaginative Faculty in the Productions of Modern Art

Hogarth excepted, can we produce any one painter within the last fifty years, or since the humour of exhibiting began, that has treated a story *imaginatively*? By this we mean, upon whom his subject has so acted that it has seemed to direct *him*—not to be arranged by him? Any upon whom its leading or collateral points have impressed themselves so tyrannically, that he dared not treat it otherwise, lest he should falsify a revelation? Any that has imparted to his compositions, not merely so much truth as is enough to convey a story with clearness, but that individualizing property, which should keep the subject so treated distinct in feature from every other subject, however similar, and to common apprehensions almost identical; so as that we might say, this and this part could have found an appropriate place in no other picture in the world but this? Is there anything in modern art—we will not demand that it should be equal—but in any way analogous to what Titian has effected, in that wonderful bringing together of two times

THE IMAGINATIVE FACULTY

in the "Ariadne", in the National Gallery? Precipitous, with his reeling Satyr rout about him, re-peopling and re-illuming suddenly the waste places, drunk with a new fury beyond the grape, Bacchus, born in fire, fire-like flings himself at the Cretan. This is the time present. With this telling of the story, an artist, and no ordinary one, might remain richly proud. Guido, in his harmonious version of it, saw no further. But from the depths of the imaginative spirit Titian has recalled past time, and laid it contributory with the present to one simultaneous effect. With the desert all ringing with the mad cymbals of his followers, made lucid with the presence and new offers of a god—as if unconscious of Bacchus, or but idly casting her eyes as upon some unconcerning pageant—her soul undistracted from Theseus—Ariadne is still pacing the solitary shore in as much heart-silence, and in almost the same local solitude, with which she awoke at day-break to catch the forlorn last glances of the sail that bore away the Athenian.

Here are two points miraculously co-uniting; fierce society, with the feeling of solitude still absolute; noonday revelations, with the accidents of the dull grey dawn unquenched and lingering; the *present* Bacchus, with the *past* Ariadne: two stories, with double Time; separate, and harmonizing. Had the artist made the woman one shade less indifferent to the God; still more, had she expressed a rapture at his advent, where would have been the story of the mighty desolation of the heart previous?

IN MODERN ART.

merged in the insipid accident of a flattering offer met with a welcome acceptance. The broken heart for Theseus was not likely to be pieced up by a God.

We have before us a fine rough print, from a picture by Raphael in the Vatican. It is the Presentation of the new-born Eve to Adam by the Almighty. A fairer mother of mankind we might imagine, and a goodlier sire perhaps of men since born. But these are matters subordinate to the conception of the *situation*, displayed in this extraordinary production. A tolerably modern artist would have been satisfied with tempering certain raptures of conubial anticipation, with a suitable acknowledgment to the Giver of the blessing, in the countenance of the first bridegroom: something like the divided attention of the child (Adam was here a child-man) between the given toy and the mother who had just blest it with the bauble. This is the obvious, the first-sight view, the superficial. An artist of a higher grade, considering the awful presence they were in, would have taken care to subtract something from the expression of the more human passion, and to heighten the more spiritual one. This would be as much as an exhibition-goer, from the opening of Somerset House to last year's show, has been encouraged to look for. It is obvious to hint at a lower expression yet, in a picture that, for respects of drawing and colouring, might be deemed not wholly inadmissible within these art-fostering walls, in which the raptures should be as ninety-nine, the gratitude

as one, or perhaps zero! By neither the one passion nor the other has Raphael expounded the situation of Adam. Singly upon his brow sits the absorbing sense of wonder at the created miracle. The *moment* is seized by the intuitive artist, perhaps not self-conscious of his art, in which neither of the conflicting emotions—a moment how abstracted!—have had time to spring up, or to battle for indecorous mastery.—We have seen a landscape of a justly admired neoteric, in which he aimed at delineating a fiction, one of the most severely beautiful in antiquity—the gardens of the Hesperides. To do Mr. ——— justice, he had painted a laudable orchard, with fitting seclusion, and a veritable dragon (of which a Polypheme, by Poussin, is somehow a fac-simile for the situation), looking over into the world shut out backwards, so that none but a “still-climbing Hercules” could hope to catch a peep at the admired Ternary of Recluses. No conventual porter could keep his keys better than this custos with the “lidless eyes”. He not only sees that none *do* intrude into that privacy, but, as clear as daylight, that none but *Hercules aut Diabolus* by any manner of means *can*. So far all is well. We have absolute solitude here or nowhere. *Ab extra*, the damsels are snug enough. But here the artist’s courage seems to have failed him. He began to pity his pretty charge, and, to comfort the irksomeness, has peopled their solitude with a bevy of fair attendants, maids of honour, or ladies of the bed-chamber, according to the approved etiquette at a court of the nineteenth

IN MODERN ART.

century; giving to the whole scene the air of a *fête-champêtre*, if we will but excuse the absence of the gentlemen. This is well, and Watteauish. But what is become of the solitary mystery—the

Daughters three,
That sing around the golden tree?

This is not the way in which Poussin would have treated this subject.

The paintings, or rather the stupendous architectural designs, of a modern artist, have been urged as objections to the theory of our motto. They are of a character, we confess, to stagger it. His towered structures are of the highest order of the material sublime. Whether they were dreams, or transcripts of some elder workmanship—Assyrian ruins old—restored by this mighty artist, they satisfy our most stretched and craving conceptions of the glories of the antique world. It is a pity that they were ever peopled. On that side, the imagination of the artist halts, and appears defective. Let us examine the point of the story in the “Belshazzar’s Feast”. We will introduce it by an apposite anecdote.

The court historians of the day record, that at the first dinner given by the late King (then Prince Regent) at the Pavilion, the following characteristic frolic was played off. The guests were select and admiring; the banquet profuse and admirable; the lights lustrous and oriental; the eye was perfectly dazzled with the display of plate, among which the great gold salt-cellar,

THE IMAGINATIVE FACULTY

brought from the regalia in the Tower for this especial purpose, itself a tower! stood conspicuous for its magnitude. And now the Rev. * * *, the then admired court Chaplain, was proceeding with the grace, when, at a signal given, the lights were suddenly overcast, and a huge transparency was discovered, in which glittered in gold letters—

“BRIGHTON—EARTHQUAKE—SWALLOW-UP-
ALIVE!”

Imagine the confusion of the guests; the Georges and garters, jewels, bracelets, moulted upon the occasion! The fans dropped, and picked up the next morning by the sly court-pages! Mrs. Fitz-what's-her-name fainting, and the Countess of * * * holding the smelling-bottle, till the good-humoured prince caused harmony to be restored by calling in fresh candles, and declaring that the whole was nothing but a pantomime *hoax*, got up by the ingenious Mr. Farley, of Covent Garden, from hints which his Royal Highness himself had furnished! Then imagine the infinite applause that followed, the mutual rallyings, the declarations that “they were not much frightened”, of the assembled galaxy.

The point of time in the picture exactly answers to the appearance of the transparency in the anecdote. The huddle, the flutter, the bustle, the escape, the alarm, and the mock alarm; the prettinesses heightened by consternation; the courtier's fear which was flattery;

IN MODERN ART

and the lady's which was affectation; all that we may conceive to have taken place in a mob of Brighton courtiers, sympathizing with the well-acted surprise of their sovereign; all this, and no more, is exhibited by the well-dressed lords and ladies in the Hall of Belus. Just this sort of consternation we have seen among a flock of disquieted wild geese at the report only of a gun having gone off!

But is this vulgar fright, this mere animal anxiety for the preservation of their persons,—such as we have witnessed at a theatre, when a slight alarm of fire has been given—an adequate exponent of a supernatural terror? the way in which the finger of God, writing judgments, would have been met by the withered conscience? There is a human fear and a divine fear. The one is disturbed, restless, and bent upon escape; the other is bowed down, effortless, passive. When the spirit appeared before Eliphaz in the visions of the night, and the hair of his flesh stood up, was it in the thoughts of the Temanite to ring the bell of his chamber, or to call up the servants? But let us see in the text what there is to justify all this huddle of vulgar consternation.

From the words of Daniel it appears that Belshazzar had made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. The golden and silver vessels are gorgeously enumerated, with the princes, the king's concubines, and his wives. Then follows—

“In the same hour came forth fingers of

THE IMAGINATIVE FACULTY

a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the *king* saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the *king's* countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosened, and his knees smote one against another."

This is the plain text. By no hint can it be otherwise inferred, but that the appearance was solely confined to the fancy of Belshazzar, that his single brain was troubled. Not a word is spoken of its being seen by any else there present, not even by the queen herself, who merely undertakes for the interpretation of the phenomenon, as related to her, doubtless, by her husband. The lords are simply said to be astonished; *i.e.* at the trouble and the change of countenance in their sovereign. Even the prophet does not appear to have seen the scroll which the king saw. He recalls it only, as Joseph did the Dream to the King of Egypt. "Then was the part of the hand sent from him [the Lord], and this writing was written." He speaks of the phantasm as past.

Then what becomes of this needless multiplication of the miracle? this message to a royal conscience, singly expressed—for it was said, "Thy kingdom is divided",—simultaneously impressed upon the fancies of a thousand courtiers, who were implied in it neither directly nor grammatically?

But, admitting the artist's own version of the story, and that the sight was seen also by the thousand courtiers—let it have been visible

IN MODERN ART

to all Babylon—as the knees of Belshazzar were shaken, and his countenance troubled, even so would the knees of every man in Babylon, and their countenances, as of an individual man, have been troubled; bowed, bent down, so would they have remained, stupor-fixed, with no thought of struggling with that inevitable judgment.

Not all that is optically possible to be seen, is to be shown in every picture. The eye delightedly dwells upon the brilliant individualities in a “Marriage at Cana”, by Veronese, or Titian, to the very texture and colour of the wedding garments, the ring glittering upon the bride’s fingers, the metal and fashion of the wine-pots; for at such seasons there is leisure and luxury to be curious. But in a “day of judgment”, or in a “day of lesser horrors, yet divine”, as at the impious feast of Belshazzar, the eye should see, as the actual eye of an agent or patient in the immediate scene would see, only in masses and indistinction. Not only the female attire and jewelry exposed to the critical eye of the fashion, as minutely as the dresses in a lady’s magazine, in the criticised picture,—but perhaps the curiosities of anatomical science, and studied diversities of posture, in the falling angels and sinners of Michael Angelo,—have no business in their great subjects. There was no leisure for them.

By a wise falsification, the great masters of painting got at their true conclusions; by not showing the actual appearances, that is, all

THE IMAGINATIVE FACULTY

conception of it admit of such unconcerning objects? can it think of them at all? or what associating league to the imagination can there be between the seers, and the seers not, of a presential miracle?

Were an artist to paint upon demand a picture of a Dryad, we will ask whether, in the present low state of expectation, the patron would not, or ought not be fully satisfied with a beautiful naked figure recumbent under wide-stretched oaks? Disseat those woods, and place the same figure among fountains, and falls of pellucid water, and you have a—*Naiad!* Not so in a rough print we have seen after Julio Romano, we think—for it is long since—*there*, by no process, with mere change of scene, could the figure have reciprocated characters. Long, grotesque, fantastic, yet with a grace of her own, beautiful in convolution and distortion, linked to her connatural tree, co-twisting with its limbs her own, till both seemed either—these, animated branches; those, disanimated members—yet the animal and vegetable lives sufficiently kept distinct—*his* Dryad lay—an approximation of two natures, which to conceive, it must be seen; analogous to, not the same with, the delicacies of Ovidian transformations.

To the lowest subjects, and, to a superficial comprehension, the most barren, the Great Masters gave loftiness and fruitfulness. The large eye of genius saw in the meanness of present objects their capabilities of treatment from their relations to some grand Past or

IN MODERN ART

Future. How has Raphael—we must still linger about the Vatican—treated the humble craft of the ship-builder, in *his* “Building of the Ark”? It is in that scriptural series, to which we have referred, and which, judging from some fine rough old graphic sketches of them which we possess, seem to be of a higher and more poetic grade than even the Cartoons. The dim of sight are the timid and the shrinking. There is a cowardice in modern art. As the Frenchman, of whom Coleridge’s friend made the prophetic guess at Rome, from the beard and horns of the Moses of Michael Angelo collected no inferences beyond that of a He Goat and a Cornuto; so from this subject, of mere mechanic promise, it would instinctively turn away, as from one incapable of investiture with any grandeur. The dock-yards at Woolwich would object derogatory associations. The depot at Chatham would be the mote and the beam in its intellectual eye. But not to the nautical preparations in the ship-yards of Civita Vecchia did Raphael look for instructions, when he imagined the Building of the Vessel that was to be conservatory of the wrecks of the species of drowned mankind. In the intensity of the action, he keeps ever out of sight the meanness of the operation. There is the Patriarch, in calm forethought, and with holy prescience, giving directions. And there are his agents—the solitary but sufficient Three—hewing, sawing, every one with the might and earnestness of a Demiurgus; under some instinctive rather than technical guidance!

THE IMAGINATIVE FACULTY

of thy own Quixote, a fit subject, as in this Second Part, to be exposed to the jeers of Duennas and Serving-men? to be monstered, and shown up at the heartless banquets of great men? Was that pitiable infirmity, which in thy First Part misleads him, *always from within*, into half-ludicrous, but more than half-compassionable and admirable errors, not infliction enough from heaven, that men by studied artifices must devise and practise upon the humour, to inflame where they should soothe it? Why, Goneril would have blushed to practise upon the abdicated king at this rate; and the she-wolf Regan not have endured to play the pranks upon his fled wits, which thou hast made thy Quixote suffer in Duchesses' halls, and at the hands of that unworthy nobleman.

In the First Adventures, even, it needed all the art of the most consummate artist in the Book way that the world hath yet seen, to keep up in the mind of the reader the heroic attributes of the character without relaxing; so as absolutely that they shall suffer no alloy from the debasing fellowship of the clown. If it ever obtrudes itself as a disharmony, are we inclined to laugh; or not, rather, to indulge a contrary emotion?—Cervantes, stung, perchance, by the relish with which *his* Reading Public had received the fooleries of the man, more to their palates than the generousities of the master, in the sequel let his pen run riot, lost the harmony and the balance, and sacrificed a great idea to the taste of his contemporaries.

• IN MODERN ART

We know that in the present day the Knight has fewer admirers than the Squire. Anticipating, what did actually happen to him—as afterwards it did to his scarce inferior follower, the Author of *Guzman de Alfarache*—that some less knowing hand would prevent him by a spurious Second Part; and judging that it would be easier for his competitor to outbid him in the comicalities than in the *romance* of his work, he abandoned his Knight, and has fairly set up the Squire for his Hero. For what else has he unsealed the eyes of Sancho? and instead of that twilight state of semi-insanity—the madness at second-hand—the contagion, caught from a stronger mind infected—that war between native cunning and hereditary deference, with which he has hitherto accompanied his master—two for a pair almost—does he substitute a downright Knave, with open eyes, for his own ends only following a confessed Madman; and offering at one time to lay, if not actually laying, hands upon him! From the moment that Sancho loses his reverence, Don Quixote is become—a treatable lunatic. Our artists handle him accordingly.

The Wedding

I do not know when I have been better pleased than at being invited last week to be present at the wedding of a friend's daughter. I like to make one at these ceremonies, which to us old people give back our youth in a manner, and restore our gayest season, in the remembrance of our own success, or the regrets, scarcely less tender, of our own youthful disappointments, in this point of a settlement. On these occasions I am sure to be in good-humour for a week or two after, and enjoy a reflected honeymoon. Being without a family, I am flattered with these temporary adoptions into a friend's family; I feel a sort of cousinhood, or uncleship, for the season; I am inducted into degrees of affinity; and, in the participated socialities of the little community, I lay down for a brief while my solitary bachelorship. I carry this humour so far, that I take it unkindly to be left out, even when a funeral is going on in the house of a dear friend. But to my subject.—

The union itself had been long settled, but its celebration had been hitherto deferred, to an almost unreasonable state of suspense in the lovers, by some invincible prejudices which

THE WEDDING

the bride's father had unhappily contracted upon the subject of the too early marriages of females. He has been lecturing any time these five years—for to that length the courtship has been protracted—upon the propriety of putting off the solemnity till the lady should have completed her five-and-twentieth year. We all began to be afraid that a suit, which as yet had abated of none of its ardours, might at last be lingered on, till passion had time to cool, and love go out in the experiment. But a little wheedling on the part of his wife, who was by no means a party to these overstrained notions, joined to some serious expostulations on that of his friends, who, from the growing infirmities of the old gentleman, could not promise ourselves many years' enjoyment of his company, and were anxious to bring matters to a conclusion during his lifetime, at length prevailed; and on Monday last the daughter of my old friend, Admiral —, having attained the *womanly* age of nineteen, was conducted to the church by her pleasant cousin J—, who told some few years older.

Before the youthful part of my female readers express their indignation at the abominable loss of time occasioned to the lovers by the preposterous notions of my old friend, they will do well to consider the reluctance which a fond parent naturally feels at parting with his child. To this unwillingness, I believe, in most cases may be traced the difference of opinion on this point between child and parent, whatever pretences of interest or prudence may be held out

THE WEDDING

to cover it. The hard-heartedness of fathers is a fine theme for romance writers, a sure and moving topic; but is there not something untender, to say no more of it, in the hurry which a beloved child is sometimes in to tear herself from the paternal stock, and commit herself to strange graftings? The case is heightened where the lady, as in the present instance, happens to be an only child. I do not understand these matters experimentally, but I can make a shrewd guess at the wounded pride of a parent upon these occasions. It is no new observation, I believe, that a lover in most cases has no rival so much to be feared as the father. Certainly there is a jealousy in *im-parallel subjects*, which is little less heart-rending than the passion which we more strictly christen by that name. Mothers' scruples are more easily got over; for this reason, I suppose, that the protection transferred to a husband is less a derogation and a loss to their authority than to the paternal. Mothers, besides, have a trembling foresight, which paints the inconveniences (impossible to be conceived in the same degree by the other parent) of a life of forlorn celibacy, which the refusal of a tolerable match may entail upon their child. Mothers' instinct is a surer guide here, than the cold reasonings of a father on such a topic. To this instinct may be imputed, and by it alone may be excused, the unbecoming artifices by which some wives push on the matrimonial projects of their daughters, which the husband, however approving, shall entertain with com-

THE WEDDING

parative indifference. A little shamelessness on this head is pardonable. With this explanation, forwardness becomes a grace, and maternal importunity receives the name of a virtue.—But the parson stays, while I preposterously assume his office; I am preaching, while the bride is on the threshold.

Nor let any of my female readers suppose that the sage reflections which have just escaped me have the oblique tendency of application to the young lady, who, it will be seen, is about to venture upon a change in her condition, at a *mature and competent age*, and not without the fullest approbation of all parties. I only deprecate *very hasty marriages*.

It had been fixed that the ceremony should be gone through at an early hour, to give time for a little *déjeuner* afterwards, to which a select party of friends had been invited. We were in church a little before the clock struck eight.

Nothing could be more judicious or graceful than the dress of the bridesmaids—the three charming Miss Foresters—on this morning. To give the bride an opportunity of shining singly, they had come habited all in green. I am ill at describing female apparel; but while *she* stood at the altar in vestments white and candid as her thoughts, a sacrificial whiteness, *they* assisted in robes such as might become Diana's nymphs—Foresters indeed—as such who had not yet come to the resolution of putting off cold virginity. These young maids, not being so blest as to have a mother living, I am told, keep single for their father's sake, and

THE WEDDING

live altogether so happy with their remaining parent, that the hearts of their lovers are ever broken with the prospect (so inauspicious to their hopes) of such uninterrupted and provoking home-comfort. Gallant girls!—each a victim worthy of Iphigenia!

I do not know what business I have to be present in solemn places. I cannot divest me of an unseasonable disposition to levity upon the most awful occasions. I was never cut out for a public functionary. Ceremony and I have long shaken hands; but I could not resist the importunities of the young lady's father, whose gout unhappily confined him at home, to act as parent on this occasion, and *give away the bride*. Something ludicrous occurred to me at this most serious of all moments—a sense of my unfitness to have the disposal, even in imagination, of the sweet young creature beside me. I fear I was betrayed to some lightness, for the awful eye of the parson—and the rector's eye of Saint Mildred's in the Poultry is no trifle of a rebuke—was upon me in an instant, souring my incipient jest to the tristful severities of a funeral.

This was the only misbehaviour which I can plead to upon this solemn occasion, unless what was objected to me after the ceremony, by one of the handsome Miss T——s, be accounted a solecism. She was pleased to say that she had never seen a gentleman before me give away a bride, in black. Now black has been my ordinary apparel so long—indeed, I take it to be the proper costume of an author—the stage

THE WEDDING

sanctions it—that to have appeared in some lighter colour would have raised more mirth at my expense than the anomaly had created censure. But I could perceive that the bride's mother, and some elderly ladies present (God bless them !), would have been well content, if I had come in any other colour than that. But I got over the omen by a lucky apologue, which I remembered out of Pilpay, or some Indian author, of all the birds being invited to the linnet's wedding, at which, when all the rest came in their gayest feathers, the raven alone apologized for his cloak because "he had no other": This tolerably reconciled the elders. But with the young people all was merriment, and shaking of hands, and congratulations, and kissing away the bride's tears, and kissings from her in return, till a young lady, who assumed some experience in these matters, having worn the nuptial bands some four or five weeks longer than her friend, rescued her, archly observing, with half an eye upon the bridegroom, that at this rate she would have "none left".

My friend the Admiral was in fine wig and buckle on this occasion—a striking contrast to his usual neglect of personal appearance. ° He did not once shove up his borrowed locks (his custom ever at his morning studies) to betray the few grey stragglers of his own beneath them. He wore an aspect of thoughtful satisfaction. I trembled for the hour, which at length approached, when after a protracted *breakfast* of three hours—if stores of cold fowls, tongues, hams, botargoes, dried fruits, wines,

THE WEDDING

cordials, &c., can deserve so meagre an appellation—the coach was announced, which was come to carry off the bride and bridegroom for a season, as custom has sensibly ordained, into the country; upon which design, wishing them a felicitous journey, let us return to the assembled guests.

As when a well-graced actor leaves the stage,
The eyes of men
Are idly bent on him that enters next,

so idly did we bend our eyes upon one another, when the chief performers in the morning's pageant had vanished. None told his tale. None sipped her glass. The poor Admiral made an effort—it was not much. I had anticipated so far. Even the infinity of full satisfaction, that had betrayed itself through the prim looks and quiet deportment of his lady, began to wane into something of misgiving. No one knew whether to take their leaves or stay. We seemed assembled upon a silly occasion. In this crisis, betwixt tarrying and departure, I must do justice to a foolish talent of mine, which had otherwise like to have brought me into disgrace in the fore-part of the day; I mean a power, in any emergency, of thinking and giving vent to all manner of strange nonsense. In this awkward dilemma I found it sovereign. I rattled off some of my most excellent absurdities. All were willing to be relieved, at any expense of reason, from the pressure of the intolerable vacuum which had succeeded to the morning bustle. By this

Rejoicings upon the New Year's Coming of Age

The *Old Year* being dead, and the *New Year* coming of age, which he does by Calendar Law, as soon as the breath is out of the old gentleman's body, nothing would serve the young spark but he must give a dinner upon the occasion, to which all the *Days* in the year were invited. The *Festivals*, whom he deputed as his stewards, were mightily taken with the notion. They had been engaged time out of mind, they said, in providing mirth and good cheer for mortals below; and it was time they should have a taste of their own bounty. It was stiffly debated among them, whether the *Fasts* should be admitted. Some said, the appearance of such lean, starved guests, with their mortified faces, would pervert the ends of the meeting. But the objection was overruled by *Christmas Day*, who had a design upon *Ash Wednesday* (as you shall hear), and a mighty desire to see how the old Domine would behave himself in his cups. Only the *Vigils* were requested to come with their lanterns, to light the gentlefolks home at night.

All the *Days* came to their day. Covers were provided for three hundred and sixty-five

REJOICINGS UPON THE

meat good or sanctified enough for him, had smuggled into the room a calf's head, which he had had cooked at home for that purpose, thinking to feast thereon incontinently; but as it lay in the dish, *March Manyweathers*, who is a very fine lady, and subject to the megrims, screamed out there was a "human head in the platter", and raved about Herodias' daughter to that degree, that the obnoxious viand was obliged to be removed; nor did she recover her stomach till she had gulped down a *Restorative*, confected of *Oak Apple*, which the merry *Twenty-Ninth of May* always carries about with him for that purpose.

The King's health being called for after this, a notable dispute arose between the *Twelfth of August* (a zealous old Whig gentlewoman) and the *Twenty-Third of April* (a new-fangled lady of the Tory stamp), as to which of them should have the honour to propose it. *August* grew hot upon the matter, affirming time out of mind the prescriptive right to have lain with her, till her rival had basely supplanted her; whom she represented as little better than a kept mistress, who went about in *fine clothes*, while she (the legitimate BIRTHDAY) had scarcely a rag, &c.

April Fool, being made mediator, confirmed the right, in the strongest form of words, to the appellant, but decided for peace' sake that the exercise of it should remain with the present possessor. At the same time, he slyly rounded the first lady in the ear, that an action might lie against the Crown for *bi-geny*.

NEW YEAR'S COMING OF AGE

It beginning to grow a little duskish, *Candlemas* lustily bawled out for lights, which was opposed by all the *Days*, who protested against burning daylight. Then fair water was handed round in silver ewers, and the *same lady* was observed to take an unusual time in *Washing* herself.

May Day, with that sweetness which is peculiar to her, in a neat speech proposing the health of the founder, crowned her goblet (and by her example the rest of the company) with garlands. This being done, the lordly *New Year*, from the upper end of the table, in a cordial but somewhat lofty tone, returned thanks. He felt proud on an occasion of meeting so many of his worthy father's late tenants, promised to improve their farms, and at the same time to abate (if anything was found unreasonable) in their rents.

At the mention of this, the four *Quarter Days* involuntarily looked at each other, and smiled; *April Fool* whistled to an old tune of "New Brooms"; and a surly old rebel at the farther end of the table (who was discovered to be no other than the *Fifth of November*) muttered out, distinctly enough to be heard by the whole company, words to this effect—that "when the old one is gone, he is a fool that looks for a better". Which rudeness of his, the guests resenting, unanimously voted his expulsion; and the malcontent was thrust out neck and heels into the cellar, as the properest place for ~~such a~~ *boutefeu* and firebrand as he had shown himself to be.

REJOICINGS UPON THE

Order being restored—the young lord (who, to say truth, had been a little ruffled, and put beside his oratory), in as few and yet as obliging words as possible, assured them of entire welcome; and, with a graceful turn, singling out poor *Twenty-Ninth of February*, that had sate all this while mumchance at the sideboard, begged to couple his health with that of the good company before him—which he drank accordingly; observing, that he had not seen his honest face any time these four years—with a number of endearing expressions besides. At the same time, removing the solitary *Day* from the forlorn seat which had been assigned him, he stationed him at his own board, somewhere between the *Greek Calends* and *Latter Lammas*.

Ash Wednesday, being now called upon for a song, with his eyes fast stuck in his head, and as well as the Canary he had swallowed would give him leave, struck up a Carol, which *Christmas Day* had taught him for the nonce; and was followed by the latter, who gave “Miserere” in fine style, hitting off the mumping notes and lengthened drawl of *Old Mortification*, with infinite humour. *April Fool* swore they had exchanged conditions; but *Good Friday* was observed to look extremely grave; and *Sunday* held her fan before her face, that she might not be seen to smile.

Shrove-tide, *Lord Mayor's Day*, and *April Fool* next joined in a glee—

Which is the properest day to drink?

NEW YEAR'S COMING OF AGE

in which all the *Days* chiming in, made a merry burden.

They next fell to quibbles and conundrums. The question being proposed, who had the greatest number of followers—the *Quarter Days* said, there could be no question as to that; for they had all the creditors in the world dogging their heels. But *April Fool* gave it in favour of the *Forty Days before Easter*; because the debtors in all cases outnumbered the creditors, and they kept *Lent* all the year.

All this while, *Valentine's Day* kept courting pretty *May*, who sate next him, slipping amorous *billets-doux* under the table, till the *Dog Days* (who are naturally of a warm constitution) began to be jealous, and to bark and rage exceedingly. *April Fool*, who likes a bit of sport above measure, and had some pretensions to the lady besides, as being but a cousin once removed,—clapped and halloo'd them on; and as fast as their indignation cooled, those mad wags, the *Ember Days*, were at it with their bellows, to blow it into a flame; and all was in a ferment: till old *Madam Septuagesima* (who boasts herself the *Mother of the Days*) wisely diverted the conversation with a tedious tale of the lovers which she could reckon when she was young, and of one *Master Rogation Day* in particular, who was for ever putting the *question* to her; but she kept him at a distance, as the chronicle would tell—by which I apprehend she meant the *Almanack*. Then she rambled on to the *Days that were gone*, the *good old Days*, and so to the *Days before the Flood*—which plainly showed

NEW YEAR'S COMING OF AGE

her old head to be little better than crazed and doited.

Day being ended, the *Days* called for their cloaks and greatcoats, and took their leaves. *Lord Mayor's Day* went off in a Mist, as usual; *Shortest Day* in a deep black Fog, that wrapt the little gentleman all round like a hedgehog. Two *Vigils*—so watchmen are called in heaven—saw *Christmas Day* safe home—they had been used to the business before. Another *Vigil*—a stout, sturdy patrol, called the *Eve of St. Christopher*—seeing *Ash Wednesday* in a condition little better than he should be—e'en whipt him over his shoulders, pick-a-back fashion, and *Old Mortification* went floating home singing—

On the bat's back I do fly,

and a number of old snatches besides, between drunk and sober; but very few Aves or Penitentiaries (you may believe me) were among them. *Longest Day* set off westward in beautiful crimson and gold—the rest, some in one fashion, some in another; but *Valentine* and pretty *May* took their departure together in one of the prettiest silvery twilights a Lover's Day could wish to set in.

Old China

I have an almost feminine partiality for old china. When I go to see any great house, I enquire for the china-closet, and next for the picture-gallery. I cannot defend the order of preference, but by saying that we have all some taste or other, of too ancient a date to admit of our remembering distinctly that it was an acquired one. I can call to mind the first play, and the first exhibition, that I was taken to; but I am not conscious of a time when china jars and saucers were introduced into my imagination.

I had no repugnance then—why should I now have?—to those little, lawless, azure-tinctured grotesques, that, under the notion of men and women, float about, uncircumscribed by any element, in that world before perspective—a china tea-cup.

I like to see my old friends—whom distance cannot diminish—figuring up in the air (so they appear to our optics), yet on *terra firma* still—for so we must in courtesy interpret that speck of deeper blue, which the decorous artist, to prevent absurdity, had made to spring up ~~between~~ their sandals.

I love the men with women's faces, and

OLD CHINA

again," she said, "when we were not quite so rich. I do not mean that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state"—so she was pleased to ramble on,—“in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury (and, O! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times!)—we were used to have a debate two or three days before, and to weigh the *for* and *against*, and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon, that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid for it.

“Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you, till all your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so threadbare—and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher, which you dragged home late at night from Barker's in Covent Garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o'clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late—and when the old bookseller with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedwards) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures—and when you lugged it home, wishing it were ~~twice~~ as cumbersome—and when you presented it to me—and when we were exploring the

OLD CHINA

—and how you would pry about at noontide for some decent house, where we might go in, and produce our store—only paying for the ale that you must call for—and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a table-cloth—and wish for such another honest hostess as Izaak Walton has described many a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went a-fishing—and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly upon us—but we had cheerful looks still for one another, and would eat our plain food savourily; scarcely grudging Piscator his Trout Hall? Now—when we go out a day's pleasuring, which is seldom, moreover, we *ride* part of the way, and go into a fine inn, and order the best of dinners, never debating the expense—which, after all, never has half the relish of those chance country snaps, when we were at the mercy of uncertain usage and a precarious welcome.

“You are too proud to see a play anywhere now but in the pit. Do you remember where it was we used to sit, when we saw the *Battle of Hexham*, and the *Surrender of Calais*, and *Bannister and Mrs. Bland in the Children in the Wood*—when we squeezed out our shillings a-piece to sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery—where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me—and more strongly I felt obligation to you for ~~having~~ brought me—and the pleasure was the better for a little shame—and when the curtain

OLD CHINA

pocketed up our loss, and in conclusion, with 'lusty brimmers' (as you used to quote it out of *heartly cheerful Mr. Cotton*, as you called him), we used to welcome in the 'coming guest'. Now we have no reckoning at all at the end of the old year—no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us."

Bridget is so sparing of her speech on most occasions, that when she gets into a rhetorical vein I am careful how I interrupt it. I could not help, however, smiling at the phantom of wealth which her dear imagination had conjured up out of a clear income of poor — hundred pounds a year. "It is true we were happier when we were poorer, but we were also younger, my cousin. I am afraid we must put up with the excess, for if we were to shake the superflux into the sea, we should not much mend ourselves. That we had much to struggle with, as we grew up together, we have reason to be most thankful. It strengthened and knit our compact closer. We could never have been what we have been to each other, if we had always had the sufficiency which you now complain of. The resisting power—those natural dilations of the youthful spirit, which circumstances cannot straiten—with us are long since passed away. Competence to age is supplementary youth, a sorry supplement indeed, but I fear the best that is to be had. We must ride where we formerly walked: live better and lie softer—and shall be wise to do so—than we had means to do in those ~~good~~ old days you speak of. Yet could those days

OLD CHINA

return—could you and I once more walk our thirty miles a-day—could Bannister and Mrs. Bland again be young, and you and I be young to see them—could the good old one-shilling gallery days return—they are dreams, my cousin, now—but could you and I at this moment, instead of this quiet argument by our well-carpeted fireside, sitting on this luxurious sofa—be once more struggling up those inconvenient staircases, pushed about, and squeezed, and elbowed by the poorest rabble of poor gallery scramblers—could I once more hear those anxious shrieks of yours—and the delicious *Thank God, we are safe*, which always followed when the topmost stair, conquered, let in the first light of the whole cheerful theatre down beneath us—I know not the fathom line that ever touched a descent so deep as I would be willing to bury more wealth in than Cræsus had, or the great Jew R—— is supposed to have, to purchase it. And now do just look at that merry little Chinese waiter holding an umbrella, big enough for a bed-tester, over the head of that pretty insipid half Madonna-ish chit of a lady in that very blue summer-house.”

THE CHILD ANGEL

Sun-threads—filmy beams—ran through the celestial napery of what seemed its princely cradle. All the winged orders hovered round, watching when the new-born should open its yet closed eyes; which, when it did, first one, and then the other—with a solicitude and apprehension, yet not such as, stained with fear, dim the expanding eyelids of mortal infants, but as if to explore its path in those its unhereditary palaces—what an inextinguishable titter that time spared not celestial visages! Nor wanted there to my seeming—O, the inexplicable simpleness of dreams!—bowls of that cheering nectar,

—which mortals *caudle* call below.

Nor were wanting faces of female ministrants, —stricken in years, as it might seem,—so dexterous were those heavenly attendants to counterfeit kindly similitudes of earth, to greet with terrestrial child-rites the young *present*, which earth had made to heaven.

Then were celestial harpings heard, not in full symphony, as those by which the spheres are tutored; but, as loudest instruments on earth speak oftentimes, muffled; so to accommodate their sound the better to the weak ears of the imperfect-born. And, with the noise of those subdued soundings, the Angelet sprang forth, fluttering its rudiments of pinions—but forthwith flagged and was recovered into the arms of those full-winged angels. And a wonder it was to see how, as years were ~~round~~ in heaven—a year in dreams is as a day—con-

THE CHILD ANGEL

tinually its white shoulders put forth buds of wings, but, wanting the perfect angelic nutriment, anon was shorn of its aspiring, and fell fluttering—still caught by angel hands—for ever to put forth shoots, and to fall fluttering, because its birth was not of the unmixed vigour of heaven.

And a name was given to the Babe Angel, and it was to be called *Ge-Urania*, because its production was of earth and heaven.

And it could not taste of death, by reason of its adoption into immortal palaces: but it was to know weakness, and reliance, and the shadow of human imbecility; and it went with a lame gait; but in its goings it exceeded all mortal children in grace and swiftmess. Then pity first sprang up in angelic bosoms; and yearnings (like the human) touched them at the sight of the immortal lame one.

And with pain did then first those Intuitive Essences, with pain and strife to their natures (not grief), put back their bright intelligences, and reduce their ethereal minds, schooling them to degrees and slower processes, so to adapt their lessons to the gradual illumination (as must needs be) of the half-earth-born; and what intuitive notices they could not repel (by reason that their nature is, to know all things at once), the half-heavenly novice, by the better part of its nature, aspired to receive into its understanding; so that Humility and Aspiration went on even-paced in the instruction of the glorious Amphibium.

But, by reason that Mature Humanity is too

THE CHILD ANGEL

gross to breathe the air of that super-subtile region, its portion was, and is, to be a child for ever.

And because the human part of it might not press into the heart and inwards of the palace of its adoption, those full-natured angels tended it by turns in the purlieus of the palace, where were shady groves and rivulets, like this green earth from which it came: so Love, with Voluntary Humility, waited upon the entertainment of the new-adopted.

And myriads of years rolled round (in dreams Time is nothing), and still it kept, and is to keep, perpetual childhood, and is the Tutelar Genius of Childhood upon earth, and still goes lame and lovely.

By the banks of the river Pison is seen, lone sitting by the grave of the terrestrial Adah, whom the angel Nadir loved, a Child; but not the same which I saw in heaven. A mournful hue overcasts its lineaments; nevertheless, a correspondency is between the child by the grave, and that celestial orphan, whom I saw above; and the dimness of the grief upon the heavenly, is a shadow or emblem of that which stains the beauty of the terrestrial. And this correspondency is not to be understood but by dreams.

And in the archives of heaven I had grace to read, how that once the angel Nadir, being exiled from his place for mortal passion, upspringing on the wings of parental love (such power had parental love for a moment to suspend the else-irrevocable law), appeared for a

THE CHILD ANGEL

brief instant in his station, and, depositing a wondrous Birth, straightway disappeared, and the palaces knew him no more. And this charge was the self-same Babe, who goeth lame and lovely—but Adah sleepeth by the river Pison.

Confessions of a Drunkard

Dehortations from the use of strong liquors have been the favourite topic of sober declaimers in all ages, and have been received with abundance of applause by water-drinking critics. But with the patient himself, the man that is to be cured, unfortunately their sound has seldom prevailed. Yet the evil is acknowledged, the remedy simple. Abstain. No force can oblige a man to raise the glass to his head against his will. 'Tis as easy as not to steal, not to tell lies.

Alas! the hand to pilfer, and the tongue to bear false witness, have no constitutional tendency. These are actions indifferent to them. At the first instance of the reformed will, they can be brought off without a murmur. The itching finger is but a figure in speech, and the tongue of the liar can with the same natural delight give forth useful truths with which it has been accustomed to scatter their pernicious contraries. But when a man has commenced sot——

O pause, thou sturdy moralist, thou person of stout nerves and a strong head, whose liver is happily untouched, and ere thy gorge riseth at the *name* which I have written, first learn

CONFESSIONS OF A DRUNKARD

About that time I fell in with some companions of a different order. They were men of boisterous spirits, sitters up a-nights, disputants, drunken; yet seemed to have something noble about them. We dealt about the wit, or what passes for it after midnight, jovially. Of the quality called fancy I certainly possessed a larger share than my companions. Encouraged by their applause, I set up for a professed joker! I, who of all men am least fitted for such an occupation, having, in addition to the greatest difficulty which I experience at all times of finding words to express my meaning, a natural nervous impediment in my speech!

Reader, if you are gifted with nerves like mine, aspire to any character but that of a wit. When you find a tickling relish upon your tongue disposing you to that sort of conversation, especially if you find a preternatural flow of ideas setting in upon you at the sight of a bottle and fresh glasses, avoid giving way to it as you would fly your greatest destruction. If you cannot crush the power of fancy, or that within you which you mistake for such, divert it, give it some other play. Write an essay, pen a character or description,—but not as I do now, with tears trickling down your cheeks.

To be an object of compassion to friends, of derision to foes; to be suspected by strangers, stared at by fools; to be esteemed dull when you cannot be witty, to be applauded for witty when you know that you have been dull; to be

CONFESSIONS OF A DRUNKARD

called upon for the extemporaneous exercise of that faculty which no premeditation can give; to be spurred on to efforts which end in contempt; to be set on to provoke mirth which procures the procurer hatred; to give pleasure and be paid with squinting malice; to swallow draughts of life-destroying wine which are to be distilled into airy breath to tickle vain auditors; to mortgage miserable morrows for nights of madness; to waste whole seas of time upon those who pay it back in little inconsiderable drops of grudging applause,—are the wages of buffoonery and death.

Time, which has a sure stroke at dissolving all connections which have no solidier fastening than this liquid cement, more kind to me than my own taste or penetration, at length opened my eyes to the supposed qualities of my first friends. No trace of them is left but in the vices which they introduced, and the habits they infixed. In them my friends survive still, and exercise ample retribution for any supposed infidelity that I may have been guilty of towards them.

My next more immediate companions were and are persons of such intrinsic and felt worth, that though accidentally their acquaintance has proved pernicious to me, I do not know that if the thing were to do over again, I should have the courage to eschew the mischief at the price of forfeiting the benefit. I came to them reeking from the steams of my late over-treated notions of companionship; and the slightest fuel which they unconsciously

CONFESSIONS OF A DRUNKARD

three female figures are ministering to a man who sits fast bound at the root of a tree. Sensuality is soothing him, Evil Habit is nailing him to a branch, and Repugnance at the same instant of time is applying a snake to his side. In his face is feeble delight, the recollection of past rather than perception of present pleasures, languid enjoyment of evil with utter imbecility to good, a Sybaritic effeminacy, a submission to bondage, the springs of the will gone down like a broken clock, the sin and the suffering co-instantaneous, or the latter fore-running the former, remorse preceding action—all this represented in one point of time.—When I saw this, I admired the wonderful skill of the painter. But when I went away, I wept, because I thought of my own condition.

Of *that* there is no hope that it should ever change. The waters have gone over me. But out of the black depths, could I be heard, I would cry out to all those who have but set a foot in the perilous flood. Could the youth, to whom the flavour of his first wine is delicious as the opening scenes of life or the entering upon some newly-discovered paradise, look into my desolation, and be made to understand what a dreary thing it is when a man shall feel himself going down a precipice with open eyes and a passive will,—to see his destruction and have no power to stop it, and yet to feel it all the way emanating from himself; to perceive all goodness emptied out of him, and yet not to be able to forget a time when it was other-

CONFESSIONS OF A DRUNKARD

wise; to bear about the piteous spectacle of his own self-ruins:—could he see my fevered eye, feverish with last night's drinking, and feverishly looking for this night's repetition of the folly; could he feel the body of the death out of which I cry hourly with feebleness and feebleness outcry to be delivered,—it were enough to make him dash the sparkling beverage to the earth in all the pride of its mantling temptation; to make him clasp his teeth,

“and not undo 'em
To suffer WET DAMNATION to run thro' 'em”.

Yea, but (methinks I hear somebody object) if sobriety be that fine thing you would have us to understand, if the comforts of a cool brain are to be preferred to that state of heated excitement which you describe and deplore, what hinders in your own instance that you do not return to those habits from which you would induce others never to swerve? if the blessing be worth preserving, is it not worth recovering?

Recovering!—O if a wish could transport me back to those days of youth, when a draught from the next clear spring could slake any heats which summer suns and youthful exercise had power to stir up in the blood, how gladly would I return to thee, pure element, the drink of children, and of child-like holy hermit! In my dreams I can sometimes fancy thy cool refreshment purling over my burning tongue. But my waking stomach rejects it. That which refreshes innocence only makes me sick and faint.

CONFESSIONS OF A DRUNKARD

duty which I have to perform for myself, as giving orders to a tradesman, &c., haunts me as a labour impossible to be got through. So much the springs of action are broken.

The same cowardice attends me in all my intercourse with mankind. I dare not promise that a friend's honour, or his cause, would be safe in my keeping, if I were put to the expense of any manly resolution in defending it. So much the springs of moral action are deadened within me.

My favourite occupations in times past now cease to entertain. I can do nothing readily. Application for ever so short a time kills me. This poor abstract of my condition was penned at long intervals, with scarcely an attempt at connection of thought, which is now difficult to me.

The noble passages which formerly delighted me in history or poetic fiction now only draw a few tears, allied to dotage. My broken and dispirited nature seems to sink before anything great and admirable.

I perpetually catch myself in tears, for any cause, or none. It is inexpressible how much this infirmity adds to a sense of shame, and a general feeling of deterioration.

These are some of the instances, concerning which I can say with truth, that it was not always so with me.

Shall I lift up the veil of my weakness any further? or is this disclosure sufficient?

I am a poor nameless egotist, who have no vanity to consult by these Confessions. I.

CONFESSIONS OF A DRUNKARD

know not whether I shall be laughed at, or heard seriously. • Such as they are, I commend them to the reader's attention, if he find his own case any way touched. I have told him what I am come to. Let him stop in time.

Popular Fallacies

I.—THAT A BULLY IS ALWAYS A COWARD

This axiom contains a principle of compensation, which disposes us to admit the truth of it. But there is no safe trusting to dictionaries and definitions. We should more willingly fall in with this popular language, if we did not find *brutality* sometimes awkwardly coupled with *valour* in the same vocabulary. The comic writers, with their poetical justice, have contributed not a little to mislead us upon this point. To see a hectoring fellow exposed and beaten upon the stage, has something in it wonderfully diverting. Some people's share of animal spirits is notoriously low and defective. It has not strength to raise a vapour, or furnish out the wind of a tolerable bluster. These love to be told that huffing is no part of valour. The truest courage with them is that which is the least noisy and obtrusive. But confront one of these silent heroes with the swaggerer of real life, and his confidence in the theory quickly vanishes. Pretensions do not uniformly bespeak non-performance. A modest, inoffensive deportment does not necessarily imply valour; neither does the absence of it

POPULAR FALLACIES

justify us in denying that quality. Hickman wanted modesty—we do not mean *him* of *Clarissa*—but who ever doubted his courage? Even the poets—upon whom this equitable distribution of qualities should be, most binding—have thought it agreeable to nature to depart from the rule upon occasion. Harapha, in the *Agonistes*, is indeed a bully upon the received notions. Milton has made him at once a blusterer, a giant, and a dastard. But Almanzor, in Dryden, talks of driving armies singly before him—and does it. Tom Brown had a shrewder insight into this kind of character than either of his predecessors. He divides the palm more equably, and allows his hero a sort of dimidiate pre-eminence:—"Bully Dawson kicked by half the town, and half the town kicked by Bully Dawson". This was true distributive justice.

II.—THAT ILL-GOTTEN GAIN NEVER PROSPERS

The weakest part of mankind have this saying commonest in their mouth. It is the trite consolation administered to the easy dupe, when he has been tricked out of his money or estate, that the acquisition of it will do the owner *no good*. But the rogues of this world—the pruder part of them, at least—know better; and, if the observation had been as true as it is old, would not have failed by this time to have discovered it. They have pretty sharp distinctions of the fluctuating and the permanent. "Lightly

POPULAR FALLACIES

come, lightly go", is a proverb which they can very well afford to leave, when they leave little else, to the losers. They do not always find manors, got by rapine or chicanery, insensibly to melt away as the poets will have it; or that all gold glides, like thawing snow, from the thief's hand that grasps it. Church land, alienated to lay uses, was formerly denounced to have this slippery quality. But some portions of it somehow always stuck so fast, that the denunciators have been fain to postpone the prophecy of refundment to a late posterity.

III.—THAT A MAN MUST NOT LAUGH AT HIS OWN JEST

The severest exaction surely ever invented upon the self-denial of poor human nature! This is to expect a gentleman to give a treat without partaking of it; to sit esurient at his own table, and commend the flavour of his venison upon the absurd strength of his never touching it himself. On the contrary, we love to see a wag *taste* his own joke to his party; to watch a quirk or a merry conceit flickering upon the lips some seconds before the tongue is delivered of it. If it be good, fresh, and racy—begotten of the occasion; if he that utters it never thought it before, he is naturally the first to be tickled with it, and any suppression of such complacence we hold to be churlish and insulting. What does it seem to imply, but that your company is weak or foolish enough to be moved by an image or a fancy that shall stir

POPULAR FALLACIES

you not at all, or but faintly? This is exactly the humour of the fine gentleman in Mandeville, who, while he dazzles his guests with the display of some costly toy, affects himself to "see nothing considerable in it".

IV.—THAT SUCH A ONE SHOWS HIS BREEDING.—THAT IT IS EASY TO PERCEIVE HE IS NO GENTLEMAN

A speech from the poorest sort of people, which always indicates that the party vituperated is a gentleman. The very fact which they deny, is that which galls and exasperates them to use this language. The forbearance with which it is usually received is a proof what interpretation the by-stander sets upon it. Of a kin to this, and still less politic, are the phrases with which, in their street rhetoric, they ply one another more grossly;—*He is a poor creature.*—*He has not a rag to cover*——&c.; though this last, we confess, is more frequently applied by females to females. They do not perceive that the satire glances upon themselves. A poor man, of all things in the world, should not upbraid an antagonist with poverty. Are there no other topics—as, to tell him his father was hanged—his sister, &c.—without exposing a secret which should be kept snug between them; and doing an affront to the order to which they have the honour equally to belong? All this while they do not see how the wealthier man stands by and laughs in his sleeve at both.

POPULAR FALLACIES

V.—THAT THE POOR COPY THE VICES OF THE RICH

A smooth text to the letter; and, preached from the pulpit, is sure of a docile audience from the pews lined with satin. It is twice sitting upon velvet to a foolish squire to be told that *he*—and not *perverse nature*, as the homilies would make us imagine, is the true cause of all the irregularities in his parish. This is striking at the root of free-will indeed, and denying the originality of sin in any sense. But men are not such implicit sheep as this comes to. If the abstinence from evil on the part of the upper classes is to derive itself from no higher principle than the apprehension of setting ill patterns to the lower, we beg leave to discharge them from all squeamishness on that score: they may even take their fill of pleasures, where they can find them. The Genius of Poverty, hampered and straitened as it is, is not so barren of invention but it can trade upon the staple of its own vice, without drawing upon their capital. The poor are not quite such servile imitators as they take them for. Some of them are very clever artists in their way. Here and there we find an original. Who taught the poor to steal—to pilfer? They did not go to the great for schoolmasters in these faculties, surely. It is well if in some vices they allow us to be—no copyists. In no other sense is it true that the poor copy them, than as servants may be said to *take after* their masters and mistresses, when they succeed to their reversionary cold meats. If the master,

POPULAR FALLACIES

to explain to a foreigner as a pun. . What would become of a great part of the wit of the last age if it were tried by this test? How would certain topics, as aldermanity, cuckoldry, have sounded to a Terentian auditory, though Terence himself had been alive to translate them? *Senator urbanus* with *Curruca* to boot for a synonym, would but faintly have done the business. Words, involving notions, are hard enough to render; it is too much to expect us to translate a sound, and give an elegant version to a jingle. The Virgilian harmony is not translatable but by substituting harmonious sounds in another language for it. To Latinize a pun, we must seek a pun in Latin that will answer to it; as, to give an idea of the double endings in *Hudibras*, we must have recourse to a similar practice in the old monkish doggerel. Dennis, the fiercest oppugner of puns in ancient or modern times, professes himself highly tickled with the "a stick" chiming to "ecclesiastic". Yet what is this but a species of pun, a verbal consonance?

IX.—THAT THE WORST PUNS ARE THE BEST

If by worst be only meant the most far-fetched and startling, we agree to it. A pun is not bound by the laws which limit nicer wit. It is a pistol let off at the ear; not a feather to tickle the intellect. It is an antic which does not stand upon manners, but comes bounding

POPULAR FALLACIES

into the presence, and does not show the less comic for being dragged in sometimes by the head and shoulders. What though it limp a little, or prove defective in one leg?—all the better. A pun may easily be too curious and artificial. Who has not at one time or other been at a party of professors (himself perhaps an old offender in that line), where, after ringing a round of the most ingenious conceits, every man contributing his shot, and some there the most expert shooters of the day; after making a poor *word* run the gauntlet till it is ready to drop; after hunting and winding it through all the possible ambages of similar sounds; after squeezing, and hauling, and tugging at it, till the very milk of it will not yield a drop further,—suddenly some obscure, unthought-of fellow in a corner, who was never 'prentice to the trade, whom the company for very pity passed over, as we do by a known poor man when a money-subscription is going round, no one calling upon him for his quota—has all at once come out with something so whimsical, yet so pertinent; so brazen in its pretensions, yet so impossible to be denied; so exquisitely good, and so deplorably bad, at the same time,—that it has proved a Robin Hood's shot; anything ulterior to that is despaired of; and the party breaks up, unanimously voting it to be the very worst (that is, best) pun of the evening. This species of wit is the better for not being perfect in all its parts. What it gains in completeness, it loses in naturalness. The more exactly it satisfies the critical, the

POPULAR FALLACIES

do not care to be cheated a second time; or, perhaps, the mind of man (with reverence be it spoken) is not capacious enough to lodge two puns at a time. The impression, to be forcible, must be simultaneous and undivided.

X.—THAT HANDSOME IS THAT HANDSOME DOES

Those who use this proverb can never have seen Mrs. Conrady.

The soul, if we may believe Plotinus, is a ray from the celestial beauty. As she partakes more or less of this heavenly light, she informs, with corresponding characters, the fleshly tenement which she chooses, and frames to herself a suitable mansion.

All which only proves that the soul of Mrs. Conrady, in her pre-existent state, was no great judge of architecture.

To the same effect, in a Hymn in honour of Beauty, divine Spenser *platonizing* sings :

—————Every spirit as it is more pure,
And hath in it the more of heavenly light,
So it the fairer body doth procure
To habit in, and it more fairly dight
With cheerful grace and amiable sight.
For of the soul the body form doth take:
For soul is form, and doth the body make.

But Spenser, it is clear, never saw Mrs. Conrady.

These poets, we find, are no safe guides in philosophy; for here, in his very next stanza

POPULAR FALLACIES

but one, is a saving clause, which throws us all out again, and leaves us as much to seek as ever :

Yet oft it falls, that many a gentle mind
Dwells in deformed tabernacle drown'd,
Either by chance, against the course of kind,
Or through unaptness in the substance found,
Which it assumed of some stubborn ground,
That will not yield unto her form's direction,
But is performed with some foul imperfection.

From which it would follow that Spenser had seen somebody like Mrs. Conrady.

The spirit of this good lady—her previous *anima*—must have stumbled upon one of these untoward tabernacles which he speaks of. A more rebellious commodity of clay for a ground, as the poet calls it, no gentle mind—and sure hers is one of the gentlest—ever had to deal with.

Pondering upon her inexplicable visage—inexplicable, we mean, but by this modification of the theory—we have come to a conclusion that, if one must be plain, it is better to be plain, all over, than, amidst a tolerable residue of features, to hang out one that shall be exceptionable. No one can say of Mrs. Conrady's countenance that it would be better if she had but a nose. It is impossible to pull her to pieces in this manner. We have seen the most malicious beauties of her own sex baffled in the attempt at a selection. The *tout ensemble*, defies particularizing. It is too complete—too consistent, as we may say—to

POPULAR FALLACIES

admit of these invidious reservations. It is not as if some Apelles had picked out here a lip—and there a chin—out of the collected ugliness of Greece, to frame a model by. It is a symmetrical whole. We challenge the minutest connoisseur to cavil at any part or parcel of the countenance in question; to say that this, or that, is improperly placed. We are convinced that true ugliness, no less than is affirmed of true beauty, is the result of harmony. Like that, too, it reigns without a competitor. No one ever saw Mrs. Conrady without pronouncing her to be the plainest woman that he ever met with in the course of his life. The first time that you are indulged with a sight of her face, is an era in your existence ever after. You are glad to have seen it—like Stonehenge. No one can pretend to forget it. No one ever apologized to her for meeting her in the street on such a day and not knowing her: the pretext would be too bare. Nobody can mistake her for another. Nobody can say of her, “I think I have seen that face somewhere, but I cannot call to mind where”. You must remember that in such a parlour it first struck you—like a bust. You wondered where the owner of the house had picked it up. You wondered more when it began to move its lips—so mildly too! No one ever thought of asking her to sit for her picture. Locketts are for remembrance; and it would be clearly superfluous to hang an image at your heart, which, once seen, can never be out of it. It is not a mean face either; its

POPULAR FALLACIES

entire originality precludes that. Neither is it of that order of plain faces which improve upon acquaintance. Some very good but ordinary people, by an unwearied perseverance in good offices, put a cheat upon our eyes; juggle our senses out of their natural impressions; and set us upon discovering good indications in a countenance, which at first sight promised nothing less. We detect gentleness, which had escaped us, lurking about an under lip. But when Mrs. Conrady has done you a service, her face remains the same; when she has done you a thousand, and you know that she is ready to double the number, still it is that individual face. Neither can you say of it, that it would be a good face if it were not marked by the small-pox—a compliment which is always more admissive than excusatory—for either Mrs. Conrady never had the small-pox; or, as we say, took it kindly. No, it stands upon its own merits fairly. There it is. It is her mark, her token; that which she is known by.

• XI.—THAT WE MUST NOT LOOK A GIFT • HORSE IN THE MOUTH:

Nor a lady's age in the parish register. We hope we have more delicacy than to do either; but some faces spare us the trouble of these *dental* enquiries. And what if the beast, which my friend would force upon my acceptance, prove, upon the face of it, a sorry Rosinante, a lean, ill-favoured jade, whom no gentleman could think of setting up in his stables? Must

POPULAR FALLACIES

I, rather than not be obliged to my friend, make her a companion to Eclipse or Lightfoot? A horse-giver, no more than a horse-seller, has a right to palm his spavined article upon us for good ware. An equivalent is expected in either case; and, with my own good-will, I would no more be cheated out of my thanks than out of my money. Some people have a knack of putting upon you gifts of no real value, to engage you to substantial gratitude. We thank them for nothing. Our friend Mitis carries this humour of never refusing a present, to the very point of absurdity—if it were possible to couple the ridiculous with so much mistaken delicacy and real good-nature. Not an apartment in his fine house (and he has a true taste in household decorations) but is stuffed up with some preposterous print or mirror—the worst adapted to his panels that may be—the presents of his friends that know his weakness; while his noble Vandykes are displaced to make room for a set of daubs, the work of some wretched artist of his acquaintance, who, having had them returned upon his hands for bad likenesses, finds his account in bestowing them here gratis. The good creature has not the heart to mortify the painter at the expense of an honest refusal. It is pleasant (if it did not vex one at the same time) to see him sitting in his dining parlour, surrounded with obscure aunts and cousins to God knows whom, while the true Lady Marys and Lady Bettys of his own honourable family, in favour to these adopted frights, are consigned to the staircase

POPULAR FALLACIES

and the lumber-room. In like manner his goodly shelves are one by one stript of his favourite old authors, to give place to a collection of presentation copies—the flour and bran of modern poetry. A presentation copy, reader—if haply you are yet innocent of such favours—is a copy of a book which does not sell, sent you by the author, with his foolish autograph at the beginning of it; for which, if a stranger, he only demands your friendship; if a brother author, he expects from you a book of yours, which does sell, in return. We can speak to experience, having by us a tolerable assortment of these gift-horses. Not to ride a metaphor to death—we are willing to acknowledge that in some gifts there is sense. A duplicate out of a friend's library (where he has more than one copy of a rare author) is intelligible. There are favours, short of the pecuniary—a thing not fit to be hinted at among gentlemen—which confer as much grace upon the acceptor as the offerer; the kind, we confess, which is most to our palate, is of those little conciliatory missives, which for their vehicle generally choose a hamper—little odd presents of game, fruit, perhaps wine—though it is essential to the delicacy of the latter that it be home-made. We love to have our friend in the country sitting thus at our table by proxy; to apprehend his presence (though a hundred miles may be between us) by a turkey, whose goodly aspect reflects to us his “plump corpusculum”; to taste him in grouse or woodcock; to feel him gliding down in the toast peculiar to the latter;

POPULAR FALLACIES

might bear mournful testimony to the first. To them the very poor man resorts for an image of the home which he cannot find at home. For a starved grate, and a scanty firing, that is not enough to keep alive the natural heat in the fingers of so many shivering children with their mother, he finds in the depths of winter always a blazing hearth, and a hob to warm his pittance of beer by. Instead of the clamours of a wife, made gaunt by famishing, he meets with a cheerful attendance beyond the merits of the trifle which he can afford to spend. He has companions which his home denies him, for the very poor man has no visitors. He can look into the goings on of the world, and speak a little to politics. At home there are no politics stirring, but the domestic. All interests, real or imaginary, all topics that should expand the mind of man, and connect him to a sympathy with general existence, are crushed in the absorbing consideration of food to be obtained for the family. Beyond the price of bread, news is senseless and impertinent. At home there is no larder. Here there is at least a show of plenty; and while he cooks his lean scrap of butcher's meat before the common bars, or munches his humbler cold viands, his relishing bread and cheese with an onion, in a corner, where no one reflects upon his poverty, he has a sight of the substantial joint providing for the landlord and his family. He takes an interest in the dressing of it; and while he assists in removing the trivet from

POPULAR FALLACIES

the fire, he feels that there is such a thing as beef and cabbage, which he was beginning to forget at home. All this while he deserts his wife and children. But what wife, and what children! Prosperous men, who object to this desertion, image to themselves some clean contented family like that which they go home to. But look at the countenance of the poor wives who follow and persecute their goodman to the door of the public-house, which he is about to enter, when something like shame would restrain him, if stronger misery did not induce him to pass the threshold. That face, ground by want, in which every cheerful, every conversable lineament has been long effaced by misery—is that a face to stay at home with? is it more a woman, or a wild cat? alas! it is the face of the wife of his youth, that once smiled upon him. It can smile no longer. What comforts can it share? what burthens can it lighten? Oh, 'tis a fine thing to talk of the humble meal shared together! But what if there be no bread in the cupboard? The innocent prattle of his children takes out the sting of a man's poverty. But the children of the very poor do not prattle. It is none of the least frightful features in that condition, that there is no childishness in its dwellings. Poor people, said a sensible old nurse to us once, do not bring up their children; they drag them up.

The little careless darling of the wealthier nursery, in their hovel is transformed betimes into a premature reflecting person. No one

POPULAR FALLACIES

has time to dandle it, no one thinks it worth while to coax it, to soothe it, to toss it up and down, to humour it. There is none to kiss away its tears. If it cries, it can only be beaten. It has been prettily said, that "a babe is fed with milk and praise". But the aliment of this poor babe was thin, unnourishing; the return to its little baby-tricks, and efforts to engage attention, bitter ceaseless ob-
jurgation. It never had a toy, or knew what a coral meant. It grew up without the lullaby of nurses, it was a stranger to the patient fondle, the hushing caress, the attracting novelty, the costlier plaything, or the cheaper off-hand contrivance to divert the child; the prattled nonsense (best sense to it), the wise impertinences, the wholesome lies, the apt story interposed, that puts a stop to present sufferings, and awakens the passions of young wonder. It was never sung to—no one ever told to it a tale of the nursery. It was dragged up, to live or to die as it happened. It had no young dreams. It broke at once into the iron realities of life. A child exists not for the very poor as any object of dalliance; it is only another mouth to be fed, a pair of little hands to be betimes inured to labour. It is the rival, till it can be the co-operator, for food with the parent. It is never his mirth, his diversion, his solace: it never makes him young again, with recalling his young times. The children of the very poor have no young times. It makes the very heart to bleed to overhear the casual street-talk between a poor woman and

POPULAR FALLACIES

XIII.—THAT YOU MUST LOVE ME AND LOVE MY DOG

“Good sir, or madam—as it may be—we most willingly embrace the offer of your friendship. We long have known your excellent qualities. We have wished to have you nearer to us; to hold you within the very innermost fold of our heart. We can have no reserve towards a person of your open and noble nature. The frankness of your humour suits us exactly. We have been long looking for such a friend. Quick—let us disburthen our troubles into each other’s bosom—let us make our single joys shine by reduplication.—But *yap, yap, yap!* what is this confounded cur? he has fastened his tooth, which is none of the bluntest, just in the fleshy part of my leg.”

“It is my dog, sir. You must love him for my sake. Here, Test—Test—Test!”

“But he has bitten me.”

“Ay, that he is apt to do, till you are better acquainted with him. I have had him three years. He never bites me.”

• *Yap, yap, yap!*—“He is at it again.”

“Oh, sir, you must not kick him. He does not like to be kicked. I expect my dog to be treated with all the respect due to myself.”

“But do you always take him out with you, when you go a friendship-hunting?”

“Invariably. ’Tis the sweetest, prettiest, best-conditioned animal. I call him my *test*—the touchstone by which to try a friend. No

POPULAR FALLACIES

in, impudently staring their father's old friend out of countenance; and will neither aid, nor let alone, the conference; that we may once more meet upon equal terms, as we were wont to do in the disengaged state of bachelorhood.

It is well if your friend, or mistress, be content with these canicular probations. Few young ladies but in this sense keep a dog. But when Rutilia hounds at you her tiger aunt; or Ruspina expects you to cherish and fondle her viper sister, whom she has preposterously taken into her bosom, to try stinging conclusions upon your constancy; they must not complain if the house be rather thin of suitors. Scylla must have broken off many excellent matches in her time, if she insisted upon all that loved her loving her dogs also.

An excellent story to this moral is told of Merry, of Della Cruscan memory. In tender youth he loved and courted a modest appanage to the Opera—in truth, a dancer—who had won him by the artless contrast between her manners and situation. She seemed to him a native violet, that had been transplanted by some rude accident into that exotic and artificial hotbed. Nor, in truth, was she less genuine and sincere than she appeared to him. He wooed and won this flower. Only for appearance sake, and for due honour to the bride's relations, she craved that she might have the attendance of her friends and kindred at the approaching solemnity. The request was too amiable not to be conceded; and in this solicitude for conciliating the good-will

POPULAR FALLACIES

of mere relations, he found a presage of her superior attentions to himself, when the golden shaft should have "killed the flock of all affections else". The morning came: and at the Star and Garter, Richmond—the place appointed for the breakfasting—accompanied with one English friend, he impatiently awaited what reinforcements the bride should bring to grace the ceremony. A rich muster she had made. They came in six coaches—the whole corps du ballet—French, Italian, men and women. Monsieur de B., the famous *pirouetter* of the day, led his fair spouse, but craggy, from the banks of the Seine. The Prima Donna had sent her excuse. But the first and second Buffa were there; and Signor Sc—, and Signora Ch—, and Madame V—, with a countless cavalcade besides of chorusers, figurantes! at the sight of whom Merry afterwards declared, that "then for the first time it struck him seriously, that he was about to marry—a dancer". But there was no help for it. Besides, it was her day; these were, in fact, her friends and kinsfolk. The assemblage, though whimsical, was all very natural. But when the bride—handing out of the last coach a still more extraordinary figure than the rest—presented to him as her *father*—the gentleman that was to *give her away*—no less a person than Signor Delpini himself—with a sort of pride, as much as to say, See what I have brought to do us honour!—the thought of so extraordinary a paternity quite overcame him; and, slipping away under some pretence from

POPULAR FALLACIES

the bride and her motley adherents, poor Merry took horse from the back yard to the nearest sea-coast, from which, shipping himself to America, he shortly after consoled himself with a more congenial match in the person of Miss Brunton; relieved from his intended clown father, and a bevy of painted buffas for bridemaids.

XIV.—THAT WE SHOULD RISE WITH THE LARK

At what precise minute that little airy musician doffs his night gear, and prepares to tune his unseasonable matins, we are not naturally enough to determine. But for a mere humbug gentleman—that has no orchestra business—call him from his warm bed to such preposterous exercises—we take ten, or half after ten (eleven, of course, during this Christmas solstice), to be the very earliest hour at which he can begin to think of abandoning his pillow. To think of it, we say; for to do it in earnest requires another half hour's good consideration. Not but there are pretty sun-risings, as we are told, and such like gawds, abroad in the world, in summer-time especially, some hours before what we have assigned; which a gentleman may see, as they say, only for getting up. But having been tempted once or twice, in earlier life, to assist at those ceremonies, we confess our curiosity abated. We are no longer ambitious of being the sun's courtiers, to attend at his morning levees. We hold the good hours of the dawn too sacred to waste them upon

POPULAR FALLACIES

such observances; which have in them, besides, something Pagan and Persic. To say truth, we never anticipated our usual hour, or got up with the sun (as 'tis called), to go a journey, or upon a foolish whole day's pleasuring, but we suffered for it all the long hours after in listlessness and headaches; Nature herself sufficiently declaring her sense of our presumption in aspiring to regulate our frail waking courses by the measures of that celestial and sleepless corraveller. We deny not that there is something sprightly and vigorous, at the outset of especially, in these break-of-day excursions. That is flattering to get the start of a lazy world; that to conquer Death by proxy in his image. But the seeds of sleep and mortality are in us; and we pay usually, in strange qualms before night falls, the penalty of the unnatural inversion. Therefore, while the busy part of mankind are fast huddling on their clothes, are already up and about their occupations, content to have swallowed their sleep by wholesale; we choose to linger a-bed and digest our dreams. It is the very time to recombine the wandering images, which night in a confused mass presented; to snatch them from forgetfulness; to shape, and mould them. Some people have no good of their dreams. Like fast feeders, they gulp them too grossly to taste them curiously. We love to chew the cud of a foregone vision; to collect the scattered rays of a brighter phantasm, or act over again, with firmer nerves, the sadder nocturnal tragedies; to drag into daylight a struggling and half-vanishing nightmare;

POPULAR FALLACIES

of dreams seem no ill introduction to that spiritual presence, upon which, in no long time, we expect to be thrown. We are trying to know a little of the usages of that colony; to learn the language, and the faces we shall meet with there, that we may be the less awkward at our first coming among them. We willingly call a phantom our fellow, as knowing we shall soon be of their dark companionship. Therefore, we cherish dreams. We try to spell in them the alphabet of the invisible world; and think we know already how it shall be with us. Those uncouth shapes which, while we clung to flesh and blood, affrighted us, have become familiar. We feel attenuated into their meagre essences, and have given the hand of half-way approach to incorporeal being. We once thought life to be something; but it has unaccountably fallen from us before its time. Therefore we choose to dally with visions. The sun has no purposes of ours to light us to. Why should we get up?

XV.—THAT WE SHOULD LIE DOWN WITH THE LAMB

We could never quite understand the philosophy of this arrangement, or the wisdom of our ancestors in sending us for instruction to these woolly bedfellows. A sheep, when it is dark, has nothing to do but to shut his silly eyes, and sleep if he can. Man found out long sixes.—Hail, candle-light! without disparagement to sun or moon, the kindest luminary

POPULAR FALLACIES

the glimmering of the left ashes, he knows that he is still smoking, but he knows it only by an inference; till the restored light, coming in aid of the olfactories, reveals to both senses the full aroma. Then how he redoubles his puffs! how he burnishes!—there is absolutely no such thing as reading, but by a candle. We have tried the affectation of a book at noonday in gardens; and in sultry arbours; but it was labour thrown away. Those gay motes in the beam come about you, hovering and teasing, like so many coquettes, that will have you all to their self and are jealous of your abstractions. By the midnight taper, the writer digests his meditations. By the same light, we must approach to their perusal, if we would catch the flame, the odour. It is a mockery, all that is reported of the influential Phœbus. No true poem ever owed its birth to the sun's light. They are abstracted works—

Things that were born, when none but the still
night,
And his dumb candle, saw his pinching throes.

Marry, daylight—daylight might furnish the images, the crude material; but for the fine shapings, the true turning and filing (as mine author hath it), they must be content to hold their inspiration of the candle.—The mild internal light, that reveals them, like fires on the domestic hearth, goes out in the sunshine. Night and silence call out the starry fancies. Milton's Morning Hymn in Paradise, we would hold a good wager, was penned at

POPULAR FALLACIES

midnight; and Taylor's rich description of a sunrise smells decidedly of the taper. Even ourself, in these our humbler lucubrations, tune our best-measured cadences (Prose has her cadences) not unfrequently to the charm of the drowsier watchman, "blessing the doors"; or the wild sweep of winds at midnight. Even now a loftier speculation than we have yet attempted, courts our endeavours. We would indite something about the Solar System.—*Betty, bring the candles.*

XVI.—THAT A SULKY TEMPER IS A MISFORTUNE

We grant that it is, and a very serious one—to a man's friends, and to all that have to do with him; but whether the condition of the man himself is so much to be deplored, may admit of a question. We can speak a little to it, being ourself but lately recovered—we whisper it in confidence, reader—out of a long and desperate fit of the sullens. Was the cure a blessing? The conviction which wrought it, came too clearly to leave a scruple of the fanciful injuries—for they were mere fancies—which had provoked the humour. But the humour itself was too self-pleasing while it lasted—we know how bare we lay ourself in the confession—to be abandoned all at once with the grounds of it. We still brood over wrongs which we know to have been imaginary; and for our old acquaintance, N——, whom we find to have been a truer friend than we took

POPULAR FALLACIES

him for, we substitute some phantom—a Caius or a Titius—as like him as we dare to form it, to wreak our yet unsatisfied resentments on. It is mortifying to fall at once from the pinnacle of neglect; to forego the idea of having been ill-used and contumaciously treated by an old friend. The first thing to aggrandize a man in his own conceit, is to conceive of himself as neglected. There let him fix if he can. To undeceive him is to deprive him of the most tickling morsel within the range of self-complacency. No flattery can come near it. Happy is he who suspects his friend of an injustice; but supremely blest, who thinks all his friends in a conspiracy to depress and undervalue him. There is a pleasure (we sing not to the profane) far beyond the reach of all that the world counts joy—a deep, enduring satisfaction in the depths, where the superficial seek it not, of discontent. Were we to recite one half of this mystery—which we were let into by our late dissatisfaction, all the world would be in love with disrespect; we should wear a slight for a bracelet, and neglects and contumacies would be the only matter for courtship. Unlike to that mysterious book in the Apocalypse, the study of this mystery is unpalatable only in the commencement. The first sting of a suspicion is grievous; but wait—out of that wound, which to flesh and blood seemed so difficult, there is balm and honey to be extracted. Your friend passed you on such or such a day,—having in his company one that you conceived worse than ambiguously

NESS. We profess no more of this grand secret than what ourself experimented on one rainy afternoon in the last week, sulking in our study. We had proceeded to the penultimate point, at which the true adept seldom stops, where the consideration of benefit forgot is about to merge in the meditation of general injustice—when a knock at the door was followed by the entrance of the very friend whose not seeing of us in the morning (for we will now confess the case our own), an accidental oversight, had given rise to so much agreeable generalization! To mortify us still more, and take down the whole flattering superstructure which pride had piled upon neglect, he had brought in his hand the identical S——, in whose favour we had suspected him of the contumacy. Asseverations were needless, where the frank manner of them both was convictive of the injurious nature of the suspicion. We fancied that they perceived our embarrassment; but were too proud, or something else, to confess to the secret of it. We had been but too lately in the condition of the noble patient in Argos:

Qui se credebat miros audire tragædos,
In vacuo lætus sessor plausorque theatro—

and could have exclaimed with equal reason against the friendly hands that cured us—

Pol, me occidistis, amici,
Non servastis, ait; cui sic extorta voluptas,
Et demptus per vim mentis gratissimus error.

NOTES BY THE AUTHOR

[Numbers refer to pages.]

7. *those pretty whimsical lines.*

HELEN

High-born Helen, round your dwelling
These twenty years I've paced in vain,
Haughty beauty, thy lover's duty
Hath been to glory in his pain.

High-born Helen, proudly telling
Stories of thy cold disdain:
I starve, I die, now you comply,
And I no longer can complain.

These twenty years I've lived on tears,
Dwelling for ever on a frown;
On sighs I've fed, your scorn my bread;
I perish now you kind are grown.

Can I who loved my beloved
But for the scorn "was in her eye",
Could I be moved for my beloved,
When she returns me sigh for sigh?

In stately pride, by my bedside,
High-born Helen's portrait hung;
Deaf to my praise, my mournful lays
Are nightly to the portrait sung.

To that I weep, nor ever sleep,
Complaining all night long to her.—
Helen, grown old, no longer cold,
Said—"You to all men I prefer".

NOTES

PREFACE TO *LAST ESSAYS OF ELIA*

(*London Magazine*, January, 1823.)

This preface is abridged from an article that appeared in the *London Magazine* of 1823 under the title of "A Character of the late Elia, by a Friend".

ix. *unlicked, incondite things*, rough and shapeless as bears' cubs. With the use of 'incondite' cp. John Phillips's "incondite rhythms", *Cyder*, ii. 414.

x. *a former Essay*, viz. "Christ's Hospital Five-and-Thirty Years Ago", in *Essays of Elia*.

xi. *an inveterate impediment*, the essayist's defective powers of utterance. In "All Fool's Day" (*Essays of Elia*) he humorously places himself under Gebir, "as patron of the stammerers".

xii. *few professed literati*. Lamb, however, counted among his intimate friends, as the collected *Letters* show, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and other distinguished contemporaries.

xiii. *proceeded a statist*, graduated a statesman, the expression (as in "Oxford in the Vacation" of the original series) being an adaptation of a familiar academic formula.

Shacklewell, a northern London suburb, the name of which is introduced purely for artistic effect. Lamb's residence at the time of writing was Colebrook Cottage, Islington.

xiv. *toga virilis*, the gown of Roman manhood, assumed at the age of fifteen.

NOTES

BLAKESMOOR IN H—SHIRE

(*London Magazine*, September, 1824)

As pointed out by Canon Ainger, the mansion of this essay is Blakesware, a tower-house of the Pimmers, not far from Ware, Hertfordshire.

1. *the beauty of holiness*, from *Psalm* cxix. 2, or cxv. 9.

2. *I used to sit and read Cowley*. Abraham Cowley (1618-1667), apart from the metaphysical qualities attributed to him by Johnson, has attractions in his *Miscellanies* and his long poem *Of Plover* that specially qualify him for perusal in a country house.

3. *all Ovid on the walls*, i.e. the myths from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were represented in the tapestry.

Actæon in mid sport. Actæon, son of Cadmus, King of Thebes, was transformed into a stag, and this description presents him with his horns in process of growing. The youth had surprised Diana when bathing, and the goddess claimed adequate compensation for injured modesty.

Don Phœbus. The reference is to the slaying of Marsyas by Apollo.

old Mrs. Battle, eulogized in the original series in "Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist", may be a member of the Pimmer family freely idealized.

4. *Lacus Inagnitus*, the unknown lake.

that garden-loving poet, Andrew Marvell (1620-1678), "Upon Appleton House, to the Lord Fairfax", l. 600. One of his best-known poems is entitled "Thoughts in a Garden".

5. *the confessed antiquary*, at once the poor student and the social figure with no coat of arms.

reveling the long line, meditating on the genealogy that includes the Mowbrays of the fourteenth century and the Howards of to-day, or the Cliffords who came with William the Conqueror and are still represented in the title Baron Clifford of Candeigh.

NOTES

6. *their prophetic "Resurgam"*, their motto, that is, indicating 'I shall rise again'.

some Damætas . . . Lincoln, a shepherd, as in Virgil's third Eclogue, keeping flocks on the pastures of Lincoln, which Lamb in "Poor Relations" claims as his ancestral county. Proud Ægon, presently mentioned, is the employer of Virgil's Damætas.

the true descendant of those old W——s. Canon Ainger explains that Lamb intentionally "disguises the family of Plumer under this change of initial".

7. *fled posterity*. The descendants of the house removed to Gilston, Plumer Ward's seat, described in Patmore's *My Friends and Acquaintances*.

watchet hue, a light-blue colour. Cp. "watchet weeds on Gallia's shore" in Collins's *The Manners*, l. 68. Lamb has "watchet-weeds" in the essay on "Christ's Hospital".

my Alice, Lamb's early love, Ann Simmons, tenderly memorialized in his "Dream-Children".

its Twelve Cæsars, busts of the Roman Emperors from Julius Cæsar to Domitian. Cp. "the old busts of the twelve Cæsars" in "Dream-Children: a Reverie" (*Essays of Elia*).

8. *to Pan or to Sylvanus*, the wood deities respectively of Greeks and Romans.

die all, probably suggested by *Non omnis moriar*, "I shall not all die", Horace, *Odes*, iii. 30. 6.

POOR RELATIONS

(*London Magazine*, May, 1823.)

9. *Agathocles' pot*, a standing evidence of obscure origin. The reference is to Agathocles, the potter, who rose to be king of Sicily, and was probably poisoned by his grandson, 289 B.C.

a Mordecai in your gate. See *Esther*, iii. 2.

11. *arms done on vellum*, indicating recent recognition by the Herald's College.

NOTES

12. *aliquando sufflaminandus erat*, "Occasionally he had to be checked by the drag", as Augustus said of Aterius the rhetorician.

Richard Amlet, Esq., in the play, viz. in Vanbrugh's *Confederacy*. He is of plebeian origin and a gambler.

13. *Poor W—*, Captain Samuel Favell, killed (as Lamb says in "Christ's Hospital") at Salamanca in 1812.

Nessian venom, such insidious poison as that of the shirt of Nessus, through which Hercules perished.

Latimer, Hugh, Bishop of Worcester, who suffered martyrdom in 1555.

14. *Hooker*, Richard (? 1554–1600), "the judicious", author of the standard work on *Ecclesiastical Polity*.

lord of his library. Cp. *The Tempest*, i. 2. 109, where Prospero says his library "was dukedom large enough".

15. *the Artist Evangelist*, St. Luke, regarded through a late tradition as the patron saint of painters.

like Satan, in *Paradise Lost*, iv. 1013.

the walls of St. Sebastian. See *ante*, "Poor W—". St. Sebastian was stormed under Wellington in August, 1813.

16. *of a sad yet comely appearance*. Cp. "clad in comely sad attire", *Faerie Queene*, i. 10. 7.

17. *young Grotiuses*, promising authorities on international law, after the manner of Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), the Dutch author of *De Jure Belli et Pacis*.

the old Minster, Westminster Abbey.

DETACHED THOUGHTS ON BOOKS AND READING

(*London Magazine*, July, 1832.)

19. *Lord Foppington in "The Relapse"*, the dandy in Vanbrugh's play of that title, which was first acted in 1697. Sheridan, in 1777, recast the piece as *The Trip to Scarborough*.

NOTES

19. *Shaftesbury*, Antony Ashley Cooper (1671-1713), published his *Characteristics* in 1711. His literary treatment of philosophical themes stimulated Pope.

Jonathan Wild, Fielding's satirical novel, Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great.

biblia a-biblia, books that are no books.

20. *Hume* . . . *Soame Jenyns*. The first three are the great historians of the eighteenth century. James Beattie (1735-1803) gained high reputation by his *Essay on Truth*, a forgotten attack on Hume, and holds a modest place in literary history with his Spenserian poem, *The Minstrel*. Soame Jenyns (1704-1787) provoked Dr. Johnson to a violent critical assault by his *Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil*, 1756.

Flavius Josephus, "that learned Jew", as Walton calls him in *The Complete Angler*, chap. i, wrote the *History of the Jewish Wars* and *Jewish Antiquities*. He died about 100 A.D.

Paley's "Moral Philosophy", the work of Dr. William Paley (1743-1805), had a lasting hold as a convenient handbook on its subject.

"things in books' clothing. Cp. the false prophets in sheep's clothing", St. Matthew, vii. 15.

usurpers of true shrines. Cp. *Paradise Lost*, i. 387. "seem its leaves", a playful adaptation from "what seem'd his head", *Paradise Lost*, ii. 672.

Population Essay, as, e.g., Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population*, 1798.

Steele . . . *Adam Smith*, the essayist, the dramatist, and the author of *The Wealth of Nations*.

blockheaded Encyclopædias. Of ancient origin, encyclopædias became familiar in England after the beginning of the eighteenth century. The *English Encyclopædia* appeared in 1801, and the *Metropolitana*, with philosophical contributions by Coleridge, was published between 1817 and 1845.

Paracelsus, i.e. Philipp Theophrast von Hohenheim (1493-1541), Swiss alchemist and physician.

NOTES

20. *Raymund Lully*, a thirteenth-century chemist of Majorca, follower of Roger Bacon.

21. *some Lethean cup*, a draught as from Lethe, the river of forgetfulness.

21-22. *copies of them to be "eterne"*, reference to *Macbeth*, iii. 2. 38.

22. "*We know not where*", loosely quoted from *Othello*, v. 2. 12.

"*Life of the Duke of Newcastle*", by his Duchess, Margaret Cavendish (1624-1673), published in 1667. A copy in the British Museum has MS. notes by the author. For tributes to the Duchess see Lamb's "Two Races of Men" and "Mackery End".

First Folio of Shakspeare, edited in 1623 by Heminge and Condell, is one of the world's literary treasures.

common editions of Rowe and Tonson. Nicholas Rowe, dramatist, published his edition of Shakespeare through Jacob Tonson in 1709.

Shakspeare gallery engravings, Charles Heath's plates engraved for the *Shakespeare Gallery*, 1807.

23. *the "Anatomy of Melancholy"*, by Robert Burton (1576-1640).

The wretched Malone, viz. Edmund Malone, who edited Shakespeare in 1790. He had Jannsen's Stratford bust whitewashed in 1793, and the outrage was not repaired till 1861.

24. *Bishop Andrewes' sermons*, i.e. ^ULancelot Andrewes (1565-1626), successively Bishop of Chichester, Ely, and Winchester.

But he brings his music. Cp. *Arcades*, 68-73, where those with "gross unpurged ear" are declared to be hopeless auditors of music.

25. *at Nando's*, a Fleet Street coffee-house, next door to the shop of Lintot, the bookseller.

"*Town and Country Magazine*", published from 1769 to 1792; revived in 1838.

NOTES

25. "*The Royal Lover and Lady G——*". It has been suggested that this may refer to George IV and the Duchess of Gordon.

Poor Tobin, John Tobin (1770–1804), author of *The Honeymoon*, and other ephemeral plays.

26. *reading "Candide"*, Voltaire's novel, conspicuously unsuitable to the particular situation.

Primrose Hill (her Cythera). The damsel is supposed to read Richardson's *Pamela* on Primrose Hill, north of Regent's Park, which is classically named for the occasion from the island near which Venus is fabled to have risen from the foam of the sea.

Snow Hill, highway between Newgate Street and Holborn, yielded temporarily to Skinner's Street in 1802.

Lardner, Nathaniel (1684–1768), the Unitarian propagandist, who wrote *The Credibility of the Gospel History*.

27. *the five points*, viz. Predestination, Irresistible Grace, Original Sin, Particular Redemption, Perseverance of the Saints, which underlie Calvin's theological system.

28. "*snatch a fearful joy*", from the fourth stanza of Gray's *Distant Prospect of Eton College*.

Martin B——, Lamb's legal friend, Martin Charles Burney, who died in 1852.

"*Clarissa*", Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe*.

A quaint poetess, Lamb's sister Mary, in *Poetry for Children*.

● STAGE ILLUSION

(*London Magazine*, August, 1825.)

32. *Jack Bannister's cowards*. Bannister (1760–1836), "beloved for his sweet, good-natured, moral pretensions", is eulogized in First Series in the essay "On Some of the Old Actors".

"*that man was frightened*", from Fielding's account of Partridge at the theatre, *Tom Jones*, xvi. 5.

33. *Gatty acts an old man*, i.e. Henry Gatty (1774–1844), comic actor.

NOTES

33. *the manner of Mr. Emery, i.e.* John Emery (1777-1822), comic actor.

his Tyke, his representation of Tyke in Morton's *School of Reform*, 1817.

34. *a third estate*, a distinct entity, a separate interest.

Macbeth must see the dagger, in *Macbeth*, ii. i. 33.

Osric, the dexterous courtier of *Hamlet*, v. 2.

35. "*Free and Easy*." Wrench enacted "Sir John Freeman" to Bartley's "Mr. Courtly" in S. J. Arnold's musical farce with this title, produced in 1816.

TO THE SHADE OF ELLISTON

(*Englishman's Magazine*, August, 1831.)

This essay is a memorial tribute to Robert William Elliston (1774-1831), actor-manager of Drury Lane Theatre from 1819 to 1826.

37. *sowing thy wild oats*. Elliston had played "Rover" in O'Keefe's comedy, *Wild Oats*.

casual sands of Avernus, the shores of Hades, Avernus (a lake in Campania) being the mythological entrance to the invisible abode of Pluto.

the vain Platonist, the philosopher who advocates the idealism of Plato, and proclaims the sovereign importance of the soul by comparison with the needs of the body.

thy Palace of Dainty Devices, an expression probably due to imperfect recollection of the two Elizabethan Miscellanies, *Painter's Palace of Pleasure*, 1566, and *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*, 1576.

38. *the schoolmen admitted*. The reference is to the mediæval *Limbus patrum* and *Limbus infantium*, the havens respectively of the righteous who preceded Christianity and of unbaptized infants.

Milton saw in visions, as described in *Paradise Lost*, iii. 445-458. Lamb's outburst of blank verse is based on this passage.

NOTES

38. *thy Regent Planet*, that under which thou wast born, hence determining thy idiosyncrasy.

Fie on sinful Phantasy, the song in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, v. 5. 99.

a poor forked shade. The reference is to "a bare forked animal", *King Lear*, iii. 4. 112.

39. *enough to sink a navy*. Cp. "a load would sink a navy", *Henry VIII*, iii. 2. 384.

the tiresome monodrame: the play by the one actor, Orpheus of Thrace, whose abortive effort to bring Eurydice back from Hades forms a picturesque episode in Virgil's *Georgic*, iv, ll. 454-527.

pura et pura anima, "a pure and cleansed life".

keysars, *kaisers*, in *Morte Arthure* appears as "kayseres", and in Spenser (*Fairie Queene*, ii. 7. 5) as "kesars".

40. *Rhadamanthus . . . brethren*. The three judges in the invisible world of ancient mythology were Rhadamanthus, Æacus, and Minos.

those Medusean ringlets, the snake locks of the mythological Medusa.

"*whip the offending Adam*": from *Henry V*, i. 1. 29.

the O. P. side, that opposite the prompter.

Prosperine, queen of Pluto.

Plaudito, et Valeto, "Applaud and bid farewell"; with reference to the *Vos plaudite* of the last speaker in a Roman play.

ELLISTONIANA

(*Englishman's Magazine*, August, 1831.)

41. *to auspicate*, to give a propitious start.

Lovelace sold his gloves. Richard Lovelace (1618-1658), Cavalier poet, was reduced to great straits by poverty in his latter days.

42. "*I like Wrench*." See essay on *Stage Illusion*, note "Free and Easy".

NOTES

56. "still-vexed Bermoothes", from *The Tempest* i. 2. 229.
 "Be but as buggs", from *Faerie Queene*, ii. 12. 25.
 57. *Charoba*, in *Gebir*, v. 129, by Walter Savage Landor (1775-1864).
Cinque Port, Hastings; the others being Romney, Hythe, Dover, and Sandwich.
 58. *Amphitrites of the town*, enthusiasts of the sea, even as *Amphitrite*, wife of Neptune.
dwell with Meshech, from *Psalms* cxx. 5.
 59. a book "to read strange matter in", adapted from *Macbeth*, i. 5. 64.
 60. "The daughters of Cheapside", &c., loosely quoted from the ode *To Master Anthony Stafford*, by Thomas Randolph (1605-1634).

THE CONVALESCENT

(*London Magazine*, July, 1825.)

62. *Mare Clausum*, "closed sea". In 1824 Great Britain and the United States prevented Russia from constituting the North Pacific a "mare clausum".
 63. *honing* (Fr. *hogner*, to growl), pining, as in the "lamenting, honing, wishing himself any thing" of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, p. 525.
 64. *folding up his thin douceur*, in reference to the old practice of wrapping in tissue paper the doctor's fee of a sovereign and a shilling.
 66. *The Lernean pangs*, agonies such as those suffered by Philoctetes from the arrows of Hercules that had been dipped in the poisonous blood of the Lernean Hydra. See *The Philoctetes of Sophocles*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, xiii. 1.
alonely fixed upon itself. For this use of 'alonely' = utterly, cp. "all onely for your sake", Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, Book I, and "not alonely the Germans", Leland's *New Year's Gift to Henry VIII.*

NOTES

66. *his own theatre*, an absorbing spectacle for himself. In "Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist", those engaged in that game are said to be "a theatre to themselves". Seneca (*Epist.* i. 7. 2) quotes from Epicurus the saying: "You and I are crowd enough for one another".

"*What a speck*", &c. In their admirable *Last Essays of Elia*, Messrs. Hallward and Hill suggest that this may be a free version of Tom Brown's "dwindled into airy nothing".

In Articula Mortis, at the very moment of death. There is in the setting of the phrase a punning reference to the proposed magazine article.

67. *a Tityus to himself*. The giant Tityus, son of Jupiter and Mother Earth, covered nine acres when stretched in death. See *Æneid*, vi. 596.

SANITY OF TRUE GENIUS

(*New Monthly Magazine*, May, 1826.)

69. *alliance with insanity*. The reference is to Dryden's "Great wits are sure to madness near allied", *Absalom and Achitophel*, i. 163.

says Cowley, in his ode *On the Death of Mr. William Harvey*, xiii.

70. *the empyrean heaven*, from *Paradise Lost*, x. 321.

the burning marl, the floor of Hell, from *Paradise Lost*, i. 296.

chaos "and old night", from *Paradise Lost*, i. 543.

"*human mind untuned*". This suggests both "the sweet bells jangled, out of tune" of *Hamlet*, iii. 1. 166, and "the untuned and jarring senses" of *King Lear*, iv. 7. 16.

shepherded by Proteus, the mythological shepherd of the seals. See Virgil, *Georgics*, iv. 394.

Caliban, the Witches, in *The Tempest* and *Macbeth* respectively.

71. "*waddest fits*", from Eclogue iv. of *The Shepherd's Hunting*, by George Wither (1588-1667).

NOTES

92. *Black Monday*: here the day for resuming uncongenial work; originally Easter Monday, because of the dismal experiences of the English army near Paris on 14th April, 1360. "My nose fell a-bleeding on Black-Monday last", says Launcelot, *Merchant of Venice*, ii. 5. 24.

93. *Lucretian pleasure*, the feeling of immunity from the troubles besetting others. Lucretius strongly illustrates this, at the opening of the second book of *De Rerum Natura*, by the figure of a spectator on shore watching a ship in a storm.

"*As low as to the fiends*", from *Hamlet*, ii. 2. 527.

Retired Leisure, from Milton, *Il Penseroso*, l. 49.

a certain cum dignitate air, as of a man enjoying *otium cum dignitate*, "ease with dignity".

Opus operatum est, my work is accomplished.

THE GENTEEL STYLE IN WRITING

(*New Monthly Magazine*, March, 1826.)

95. *my Lord Shaftesbury and Sir William Temple*. For Shaftesbury see *ante* "Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading". Sir William Temple (1628-1700), patron of Swift, was a distinguished statesman and an essayist.

Shene, i.e. Sheen, near Richmond, Surrey.

scent of Nimeguen. Temple was ambassador to the States-General at Hague and Nimeguen in 1668 and 1678.●

96. *morrice-dancers*, dancers of the Morris or Morisco, brought by the Moors into Spain, and said to have been introduced into England by John of Gaunt.

97. *Old Prince Maurice*, Count of Nassau-Siegen, Prince of the German Empire, commanded the army of the Netherlands in 1665.

Count Egmont, general of horse to the King of Spain, died in 1707. The Rhinegrave was Count of the Rhine district in Germany.

NOTES

(1660-1746). Canon Ainger shows that the Isabella of the cast was Mrs. Siddons.

106. *Mr. Liston*, i.e. John Liston, the comedian (1777-1846).

Mrs. Charles Kemble, née Marie Thérèse de Camp, was married, in 1806, to Charles Kemble, brother of Mrs. Siddons and John Kemble.

Macready, William Charles (1793-1873), tragedian.

Mr. Matthews's. The reference is to Charles, the comedian, father of Charles James Matthews.

Old tones, half-faded. Dodd, Parsons, and Baddeley figure in the Essay (First Series) "On Some of the Old Actors", while Edwin is referred to in "The Acting of Munden".

Diamond's, the Orchard Street Theatre, built by Palmer, the brewer, in 1767, and for a time managed by William Diamond, himself a playwright of some note.

107. *sup off a roast fowl*, a scene in *The Children in the Wood*.

110. *Mrs. Crawford* (1734-1801), an actress whose maiden name was Street, and who, says Lamb, had become "a third time a widow since I knew her". See ante in "Author's Notes".

THE TOMBS IN THE ABBEY

(*London Magazine*, October, 1823.)

This essay is part of Lamb's reply to an attack of Southey's in the *Quarterly Review* for January, 1823.

111. *historified*, written of in *The Book of the Church and Vindiciæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*.

112. *a hint in your Journal*, viz. *The Quarterly Review*, to which Southey was one of the most frequent contributors from its beginning in 1809.

Beautiful Temple, with reference to *Acts of the Apostles*, iii. 2.

113. *the adjacent Park*, St. James's.

the tomb of Nelson, under the dome of St. Paul's.

NOTES

117. *dinged*, made dingy, darkened.

118. *valance* (Fr. Valence, south of Lyons, with silk factories), hanging drapery round a bed. So "Valance of Venice, gold of needlework", *Taming of the Shrew*, ii. 1. 348.

pails of gelid, i.e. of cold water (L. *gelu*, ice).

Trumpington, a village near Cambridge. In *The Prelude*, iii. 275, Wordsworth dexterously associates "the pleasant Mill of Trompington" with Chaucer.

heavier tomes at Pembroke, volumes within the library of Pembroke College.

119. *tremor cordis*, palpitation of the heart.

his good Sir Hugh, viz. Sir Hugh Evans, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, iii. 1. 17.

that Abyssinian traveller, James Bruce (1730-1794), who led the way towards the sources of the Nile. His *Travels* appeared in 1790.

vales of Amwell, between Hertford and Ware, the sources of the "New River".

120. "*And could such spacious virtue*", from the elegy by John Cleveland (1613-1659) on Edward King, the subject of Milton's *Lycidas*.

wandering into Euripus with Aristotle. The reference is to the legend that the philosopher, despairing of being able to understand the tides of the strait Euripus, between the mainland and Eubœa, threw himself into its waters.

with Clarence in his dream, in *Richard III*, i. 4. 9. The other references in the paragraph may be explained together. *Christian* is Bunyan's Pilgrim. *Palinurus* is the pilot of Æneas, whose fate is mentioned in *Æneid*, v. 854. *constrained Lazari* are those restored to life like Lazarus in *St. John*, xi. *Charon* is the mythological boatman, who ferried souls across the Styx. *Arion* is the harper of Lesbos, who was saved from drowning by a dolphin. *Machaon* was the physician of the Greeks in the Trojan War, and *Dr. Hawes* (1736-1808) attended Goldsmith on his deathbed.

NOTES

124. *Author of the "Schoolmistress"*, William Shenstone (1714-1763).

ad Leonoram, to Leonora, i.e. Eleanora Baroni, the Italian singer, whom the poet discovered during his sojourn in Italy. The poem—the drift of which is that, while each of us has a guardian angel, the very voice of God is heard in the strains of Leonora—may be translated as follows:—

"To everyone (believe me, mortals) has been deputed his own winged guardian from the heavenly orders. What wonder is it, Leonora, if a greater mark of distinction is thine, for thy very voice re-echoes the present Deity? Either the Deity or at the very least a third intellect of the vaulted sky glides with elusive movement, thrilling along thy vocal chords; glides thrilling, and readily inures mortal bosoms to make gradual acquaintance with immortal sound. For if indeed God is 'all in all', and diffused through everything, in thee alone he speaks, holding silence through the rest of creation."

125. *the pale Dian*, i.e. Diana, goddess of the moon.

129. Sonnet ix: *Aganippe well*, the Muses' fountain, at the foot of Mt. Helicon, in Bœotia. *Tempe*, the beautiful vale of Thessaly, sacred to Apollo.

Sonnet x: *imp feathers oft on Fame*, engraft wings on Fame; give her fresh force. *His sire's revenge*. Edward revenged the death of his father by securing the deposition of Henry VI, and by his victories over the Lancastrians. *witty Lewis*, Louis XI. *durst prove To lose his crown*, by avowing marriage with Elizabeth Woodville, Lady Grey.

130. Sonnet xi: *Æol's youth*, the youthful deputies of Æolus, King of the Winds.

131. *The spirit of "learning and of chivalry"*, allusion to Spenser's dedication of the *Shepherd's Calendar*.

"*jejune*", "*frigid*", &c., are epithets applied to Sidney's sonnets by Hazlitt in his *Lectures on the Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*. As a specimen of the poet's work he quotes the last of the cluster given by Lamb,

NOTES

137. *flower of Cytherea*, the rose, sacred to Venus.

"many waters", from *Revelation*, xvii. 1.

"both seem either", adaptation of *Paradise Lost*, ii. 670.

Autolyceus-like, i.e. like Autolyceus in *Winter's Tale*, iv. 3. 199.

138. *allusively to the flight of Astræa*, who "left the earth last of the heavenly deities", offended at the excesses of the Iron Age, as is mentioned in the inserted quotation from Ovid, *Metam.* i. 4. 150.

"*Man goeth forth*", from *Psalms* civ. 23.

139. *constellated under Aquarius*, born under the influence of the Water-bearer.

Basilian water-sponges, i.e. water-drinkers like the essayist's friend, Basil Montagu.

right topping Capulets, rivals of the Montagues in *Romeo and Juliet*.

140. "*Facil*" and sweet, as Virgil sings, *Æneid*, vi. 126.

revocare gradus, &c., "to recall your steps, and to walk forth into the open air".

141. *The craving Dragon*. The reference is to the apocryphal additions to the *Book of Daniel*. See also *Isaiah*, xlvi. 1; *Jeremiah*, l. 2; and, in the *Apocrypha*, *Baruch*, vi. 40.

Bob Allen. See "Christ's Hospital" in *Essays of Elia*.

142. *Parson Este and Topham*, viz. Rev. Charles Este and Edward Topham, the latter of whom started *The World* in 1787.

Boaden, James (d. 1839), playwright, and author of a *Memoir of Mrs. Siddons*.

143. *by change of property*, Stuart having sold the *Morning Post* in 1803.

Rackstrow's Museum, a collection of curiosities in a building in Fleet Street, near Chancery Lane.

the "Bigod" of Elia. See First Series, "Two Races of Men".

NOTES

"More hot than Actn' or flaring Mongiball", occurs in *Faerie Queene*, ii. 9. 29.

161. "*strange bed-fellows*", &c., with reference to *The Tempest*, ii. 2. 42.

put into the mouth of thy Quixote, in Pt. ii., chap. 58.

"*fine frenzies*", with reference to *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, v. 1. 12.

162. *Goneril . . . Regan*, daughters of King Lear.

163. *the Author of "Guzman de Alfarache"*: Mateo Aleman, who issued his romance in 1599.

offering at one time, in Pt. ii., chap. '60.

THE WEDDING

(*London Magazine*, June, 1825.)

165. *our own youthful disappointments*, such as Lamb, for himself, touchingly enshrines in the "Dream Children" of *Essays of Elia*.

166. *daughter of my old friend, Admiral —*, viz. Sarah, daughter of Mme. D'Arblay's brother, Admiral Burney, who was married in 1821 to her cousin, John Thomas Payne, bookseller.

167. *unparallel subjects*, those devoted from different stand-points.

169. *Iphigenia*, the maiden sacrificed on the eve of the Trojan War by her father Agamemnon.

Saint Mildred's in the Poultry, a church recently superseded by business premises. The Poultry, once crowded with poulterers, is part of Cheapside, London.

the handsome Miss T—s, the Misses Thomas, whose father was President of the Royal College of Surgeons.

170. *Pilpay*, or Bidpai, the Indian fabulist of unknown date. The earliest extant form of his contribution to the literature of didactic fiction is an Arabic version of about 750 A.D. See the rendering by Sir Thomas North, in 1570, from Doni's Italian *Moral Filosofia*. c

botargoes (Sp. *botarga*, harlequin's pantaloons, from

NOTES

botalarga, a large leathern bag), a sausage made of the roes of the mullet fish, and eaten with oil and vinegar.

172. *concordia discors*, jarring harmony, from Horace, *Epist.* i. 12. 19.

173. as *Marvell* expresses it, i.e. Andrew Marvell (1620-1678) in the poem *Upon Appleton House*, l. 744.

REJOICINGS UPON THE NEW YEAR'S COMING OF AGE

(*London Magazine*, January, 1823.)

175. *the old Domine*, or dominie, i.e. schoolmaster; Ash Wednesday being the first day of Lent.

176. *Epiphanous*, visibly brilliant, coined from Epiphany, a variant for Twelfth Day.

old Erra Pater, a legendary Jewish astrologer. In *Hudibras*, i. 1. 120, the name seems to be assigned to the astrologer William Lilly, who died in 1681.

177. *Lord Mayor's Day*, 9th November.

barons of beef, consisting of the two sirloins joined together by the backbone. The baron, says Dr. Brewer, "is the back part of the ox, called in Danish the *rug*".

dried ling, feeding appropriate in Lent.

the great custard, a traditional item of the Lord Mayor's banquet.

cock broth: cock-throwing and cock-fighting having long been pastimes practised on Shrove Tuesday.

a hen pheasant, the implication being that pheasant-shooting begins with September. This is so with partridges, but pheasants have a close time from 1st February to 30th September.

the Thirtieth of January, anniversary of execution of Charles I. The Puritans celebrated the day with festivities, ultimately forming a Calves' Head Club, and taking care after the Restoration to proceed in a secret or "smuggling" fashion.

NOTES

POPULAR FALLACIES

(*New London Magazine*, June–September, 1826.)

I

214. *Hickman*, Henry (d. 1692), controversial Non-conformist. Peter Heylyn and John Durel were among the disputants with whom he contended.

him of Clarissa, the prim doctor of Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe*.

Harapha, the giant in *Samson Agonistes*.

Almanzor, in *Dryden*, viz. in *The Conquest of Granada*.

Tom Brown (1663–1704), satirist and author of the epigrammatic lines: "I do not love thee, Dr. Fell", &c., wrote against Dryden, Dufsey, and others. Lamb's reference is to his *Table-Talk*.

II

215. *as the poets will have it*. From Hesiod downwards poets have noted that unjust acquisition spells impending loss.

Church land. The reference is to the old saying that Church land, dishonestly appropriated, "hath proved like a moth fretting a garment, and secretly consumed both".

III

216. *the fine gentleman in Mandeville*, i.e. in the *Fable of the Bees* of Bernard de Mandeville (1670–1733). The contention of the writer is that Private Vices are Public Benefits.

V

217. *schoolmasters in these faculties*, departments of study, as in the universities, in which the faculties are: arts, divinity, law, and medicine. The medical profession is sometimes specifically named "the faculty".

218. *liar in grain*, an inevitable liar, one stained with the practice as wood is with cochineal.

NOTES

XVI

251. *that mysterious book in the Apocalypse*, mentioned in *Revelation*, x. 10.

252. *a made man*, a favourite of fortune, like the "made old man" of *Winter's Tale*, iii. 3. 124.

allay of sweetness, as in the waters of Marah, *Exodus*, xv. 25.

253. *Arabia Stony*, the antithesis of *Arabia Felix*, or prosperous Arabia.

254. *benefit forgot*, prompted by the song of Amiens in *As You Like It*, ii. 7. 186.

the noble patient in Argos, immortalized by Horace, *Epistles*, ii. 2. 129, "who imagined that he was hearing some admirable tragedians, a joyful sitter and applauder in an empty theatre". His closing protest is this:—"By heavens, my friends", said he, "you have destroyed not saved me; to rob me thus of my pleasure, and take from me by force such a most agreeable delusion of mind'."

